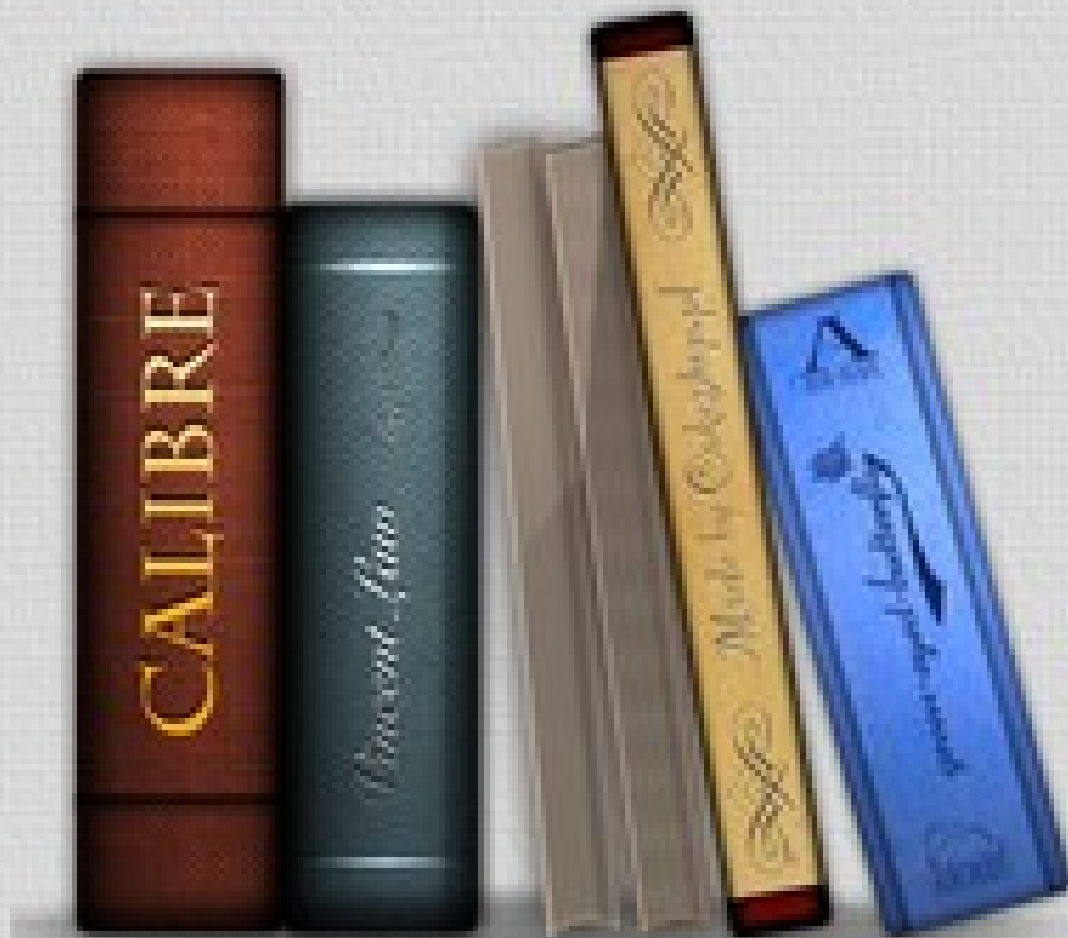


DGuzik 40 Matthew

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(Mat 1:1)

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

This is the record of the genealogy¹ of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

(Guzik)

Mat 1:1-25

MATTHEW 1 - THE GENEALOGY AND BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

A. The place of the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.

1. Matthew: The first gospel for a reason.

a. Matthew was seen as a “prestigious” gospel in the early church, because it had some significant portions of Jesus’ teaching not included in other gospels, such as a fuller version of the Sermon on the Mount. In addition, it was the only one of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) to have an apostolic author.

b. Additionally, the Jewish flavor of the Gospel of Matthew makes for a logical transition between the Old and New Testaments. For these reasons, the early church placed it first in order among the four gospel accounts.

c. The author is Matthew (also known as Levi), who was a former tax collector before he followed Jesus as a disciple.

i. Critical theories that attempt to assign Matthew to two authors - one who presented teachings of Jesus, the other who presented the actions of Jesus - are popular among some scholars. But this is an unfounded and highly speculative criticism.

ii. Some early church commentators and modern scholars say that Matthew originally wrote his gospel in Hebrew, and it was then translated into Greek. But there is really no

concrete evidence for this theory, such as the discovery of a Hebrew manuscript of Matthew.

2. The theme of the gospel of Matthew: Jesus as King and Messiah.

a. The key phrase *this was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet* occurs some 16 times in this Gospel. Matthew shows Jesus as the rightful Messiah of Israel, fulfilling prophecy.

B. The genealogy of Jesus Christ.

1. (Mat_1:1) Matthew shows his theme in the first verse: Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy and of Israel's expectation.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

a. **Son of David:** Jesus is the kingly Messiah promised from David's royal line (2Sa_7:12-16).

b. **Son of Abraham:** Jesus is the Seed of Abraham in Whom all nations would be blessed (Gen_12:3).

2. (Mat_1:2-16) Jesus' genealogy through Joseph.

Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor

begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

a. This genealogy establishes Jesus' claim to the throne of David through his adoptive father Joseph. This is not His blood lineage through Mary, but His legal lineage through Joseph. The Gospel of Luke provides Jesus' blood lineage through Mary.

b. **Tamar . . . Rahab . . . Ruth . . . her who had been the wife of Uriah:** In this genealogy is the unusual presence of four women. Women were rarely mentioned in ancient genealogies, and the four mentioned here are worthy of special note as examples of God's grace. They show how God can take unlikely people and use them in great ways.

i. **Tamar** (Mat_1:3): She sold herself as a prostitute to her father in-law Judah to bring forth Perez and Zerah.

ii. **Rahab** (Mat_1:5): She was a Gentile prostitute, for whom God took extraordinary measures to save from judgment and her lifestyle of prostitution.

iii. **Ruth** (Mat_1:5): She was from Moab, a Gentile.

iv. **Her who had been the wife of Uriah:** Bathsheba (mentioned by implication in Mat_1:6) was an adulteress, infamous for her sin with David.

c. Why are these four women listed in the genealogy of Jesus?

i. To demonstrate that Jesus Christ was not some kind of "blue blood" in the sense that He did not come from a "pure" aristocratic background.

ii. To demonstrate that Jesus identifies with sinners in His genealogy, even as He will in His birth, baptism, life, and His death on the cross.

iii. To show that there is a new place for women under the New Covenant. In both the pagan and the Jewish culture of that day, men often had little regard for women. In that era,

Jewish men prayed every morning, thanking God that they were not Gentiles, slaves, or women. And women were regarded more highly among the Jews than among the pagans!

3. (Mat_1:17) Matthew's organization of the genealogy.

So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

a. **Fourteen generations . . . fourteen generations . .**

. fourteen generations: Matthew points out that this genealogy is not complete. There were not actually 14 generations between the landmarks he indicates, but Matthew edited the list down to make it easy to remember and memorize.

b. The practice of skipping generations at times was common in the listing of ancient genealogies. Matthew did nothing unusual by leaving some generations out.

C. The Birth of Jesus Christ.

1. (Mat_1:18) Mary, while engaged to Joseph, is found to be with child as a result of a miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

a. **She was found with child of the Holy Spirit:** Matthew plainly (without Luke's detail) presents the virginal conception and birth of Jesus. However, the virgin birth was difficult for people to believe back then, even as it is also doubted now by some.

b. The enemies of Jesus knew there were "suspicious" circumstances surrounding His parentage, and make reference to it in passages like Joh_8:19; Joh_8:41. Lies spread that Mary had become pregnant from a Roman soldier. Here, Matthew sets the story straight - both then and now.

2. (Mat_1:19) Joseph seeks a quiet divorce.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

a. **A just man, and not wanting to make her a public example:** Considering it impossible to go through with marriage to someone who has been unfaithful to him, Joseph makes a “logical” decision to seek a quiet divorce.

b. **To put her away secretly:** This refers to breaking an engagement by divorce. Remember that betrothal (engagement) was binding in Jewish culture, and one needed a divorce to break an engagement. **Joseph her husband** shows that even though they were not formally married, Joseph was still considered Mary’s **husband** by engagement.

3. (Mat_1:20-21) An angel speaks to Joseph in a dream, convincing him not to divorce Mary.

But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

a. **Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream:** This was not *the angel of the Lord*, but simply **an angel of the Lord**. Perhaps it was Gabriel, who is prominent in the announcements made to Mary and Zacharias (Luk_1:19; Luk_1:26). Yet those were actual angelic visitations, this was presented to Joseph **in a dream**.

b. **Joseph, son of David:** The address **son of David** should have alerted Joseph that something was significant here. It is a reference to his legal lineage to the throne of David.

c. **That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit:** It seems that Mary had not told Joseph that she was

pregnant by the Holy Spirit. This shouldn't surprise us; how could she (or anyone except God) explain such a thing?

d. **You shall call his name JESUS:** The name **JESUS** ("the salvation of Yahweh") was fairly common in that day, but supremely blessed in our day. As it is said, there is *no other name under heaven by which men must be saved* (Act_4:12).

e. **For He will save His people:** Save them from what? **He will save His people from their sins.** Jesus meets us *in* our sin, but His purpose is to save us *from* them. First from the penalty of sin, then from the power of sin, and finally from the presence of sin.

4. (Mat_1:22-23) The virgin birth as the fulfillment of prophecy.

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

a. This is the first use of **that it might be fulfilled**, which will become a familiar theme throughout Matthew.

b. **Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel:** There has been some measure of controversy regarding this quote from Isa_7:14, primarily because the Hebrew word *Almah* can be translated as either **virgin** or "young woman."

i. But the issue is ridiculous to argue. In this context, clearly *Almah* indicates a virgin, because the Old Testament never uses the word in a context other than "virgin" and because the Septuagint translates it categorically "virgin."

c. **Immanuel:** This title of Jesus refers to both His deity (**God with us**) and His identification and nearness to man (**God with us**).

5. (Mat_1:24-25) Joseph marries Mary after the angelic announcement.

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did

not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

a. **Did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son:** The words **did not know her till** imply that Joseph and Mary had normal marital relations after Jesus' birth. This denies the Roman Catholic dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

i. This is an unbiblical, doctrine, which did not appear earlier than the fifth century after Jesus. It should be placed with the dogmas of Mary's Immaculate Conception, assumption into heaven, and present role as a mediator for believers. Each one of these is man's invention, meant to exalt Mary in an unbiblical manner.

b. **And he called His name JESUS:** The simple obedience of Mary and Joseph in naming the baby **JESUS** is worthy of notice. Such simple obedience should never be lost in the Christian life.

(Mat 1:2) Abraham was the father² of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, (Mat 1:3) Judah the father of Perez and Zerah (by Tamar), Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, (Mat 1:4) Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, (Mat 1:5) Salmon the father of Boaz (by Rahab), Boaz the father of Obed (by Ruth), Obed the father of Jesse, (Mat 1:6) and Jesse the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon (by the wife of Uriah³), (Mat 1:7) Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa,⁴ (Mat 1:8) Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah, (Mat 1:9) Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, (Mat 1:10) Hezekiah the father of

Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon,⁵ Amon the father of Josiah, (Mat 1:11) and Josiah⁶ the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

(Mat 1:12) After⁷ the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel,⁸ Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, (Mat 1:13) Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, (Mat 1:14) Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, (Mat 1:15) Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, (Mat 1:16) and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom⁹ Jesus was born, who is called Christ.¹⁰

(Mat 1:17) So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ,¹¹ fourteen generations.

(Mat 1:18) ***The Birth of Jesus Christ***

Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way. While his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they came together,¹²

she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

(Mat 1:19) Because Joseph, her husband to be,¹³ was a righteous man, and because he did not want to disgrace her, he intended to divorce her¹⁴ privately.

(Mat 1:20) When he had contemplated this, an¹⁵ angel of the Lord¹⁶ appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

(Mat 1:21) She will give birth to a son and you will name him¹⁷ Jesus,¹⁸ because he will save his people from their sins."

(Mat 1:22) This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: (Mat 1:23) "

Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and

they will call him 19 **Emmanuel**,"20 which means21 "**God with us.**"22

(Mat 1:24) When Joseph awoke from sleep he did what the angel of the Lord23 told him. He took his wife, (Mat 1:25) but did not have marital relations24 with her until she gave birth to a son, whom he named25 Jesus.

(Mat 2:1) **The Visit of the Wise Men**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem1 in Judea, in the time2 of King Herod,3 wise men4 from the East came to Jerusalem5 (Guzik)

Mat 2:1-23

MATTHEW 2 - WISE MEN FROM THE EAST, ESCAPE TO EGYPT AND BACK AGAIN

A. Wise men from the east come to honor Jesus.

1. (Mat_2:1-2) The wise men arrive in Jerusalem.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

a. **Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem:**

Misconceptions and legends abound about these wise men. They were not kings, but **wise men**, which means they were astronomers. There were not only three, but probably a great company. They seem to have not come on the birth night, but many days (or even months) later.

i. Church traditions even tell us their names - supposedly Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar.

You can see their supposed skulls in a cathedral in Cologne, Germany.

b. **Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?**

These ancient scientists from Persia were on an important mission. They probably had been alerted to the prophetic significance of their times by the prophecies of Daniel and other Old Testament prophets.

i. Jewish legends say that Daniel himself, as an official of the Persian government, founded this order of *Magi* (**wise men**), and instructed them to watch for the Messiah through the generations.

ii. This shows us that the whole world was looking for the Messiah, not only Israel.

c. **For we have seen His star in the East:** There has been considerable speculation on this **star** they saw in the East. Some say it was a curious conjunction of planets, others a comet. These are possible, but it is also possible God provided a completely unique phenomenon for them to see.

i. Whatever it was, it is significant that God meet them in their own medium: He guides the astronomers by a star.

d. **And have come to worship Him:** The wise men come first to Jerusalem, assuming that the leaders of the Jews would be aware and excited about the birth of their Messiah. The wise men are about to find that this isn't the case at all.

2. (Mat_2:3) Herod is troubled at the news brought by the wise men.

When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

a. **When Herod the king heard this:** Herod the Great (one of several Herods mentioned in the Bible, and the ancestor of the others) was famous for both his magnificent public building projects, and his ruthless, cruel paranoia.

i. Herod was not a Jew at all, but an Edomite, and Rome recognized him as a vassal king over Judea. The Jews tempered their great hatred of him with admiration for his building projects, such as the magnificent improvements made to the second temple.

ii. Motivated by his great paranoia and cruelty, he murdered the members of the Sanhedrien, his wife, his mother in-law, and his three sons.

iii. When Herod knew that his death was approaching, he had the most distinguished leaders of Jerusalem arrested on

false charges. He ordered that as soon as he died, they should all be killed - he knew well no one would mourn his own death, so he was determined that *some* tears be shed when he died.

b. **He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him:** The fact that **all Jerusalem** was **troubled** with Herod is significant. This was due either to the fact that the people of Jerusalem rightly feared what sort of paranoid outburst might come from Herod upon hearing of a rival king being born, or because of the size and dignity of this caravan from the East.

3. (Mat_2:4-6) Herod is instructed regarding the Messiah's coming by the chief priests and scribes.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

a. **So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea" :** Sadly, these experts have the right information (quoting from Mic_5:2), but seem personally uninterested in meeting the Messiah for themselves, just like some "Bible scholars" today.

4. (Mat_2:7-8) True to character, Herod attempts to use wise men to find the child that he may kill Him.

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

a. **Determined from them what time the star appeared:** Because Herod commanded that all boys two and younger be killed in the area, we can assume that the wise men first saw the star, on the night Jesus was born, a

year or so previously. Herod ordered the execution of children two and under just to be safe.

i. Remember that the journey from Persia to Judea was not quick. The wise men may have left as soon as logistics allowed.

b. **Bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also:** The irony is strong. Herod claims a desire to **worship** Jesus, when he really wants to kill Him.

5. (Mat_2:9-12) The wise men present gifts to Jesus and leave without informing Herod.

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him.

And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

a. **Behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them:** The star continued to guide them, apparently re-appearing. Surely this was a supernatural phenomenon.

b. **When they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh:** The idea that there were three wise men comes from the fact that there were three gifts. Gold representing royalty, frankincense representing priesthood, and myrrh representing death.

c. **Fell down and worshipped Him:** More important than their gifts is the fact that they worshipped Jesus. It must have been a curious sight to see these impressive dignitaries bowing before a young child.

d. **Being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way:** Their worship is also manifested in obedience. They are obedient to the heavenly dream and leave without serving as Herod's informants.

6. We see here three different responses to Jesus, and all people respond in one of these three ways.

a. Herod displayed an open hatred and hostility toward Jesus.

b. The chief priests and the scribes were indifferent toward Jesus, all the while retaining their religious respectability.

c. The wise men sought out Jesus, and worshipped Him - even at great cost.

d. We see here Jesus coming to the Jew first, then the Gentile; to the humble and ignorant first, then the honorable and learned; to the poor first, then the rich; to the West first, then the East.

B. The flight to Egypt and the return to Nazareth.

1. (Mat_2:13-15) Joseph, Mary, and Jesus find refuge in Egypt.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

a. **Flee to Egypt:** There was a large Jewish community in Egypt. It wasn't strange that the Holy Spirit would guide Joseph to take the family there.

b. **When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night:** But we are impressed by Joseph's rapid (leaving the very **night** of the dream) and complete obedience. This wasn't an easy thing to do, but he did it.

c. **Out of Egypt I called My Son:** In the process, another prophecy was fulfilled. At first glance, we might wonder how this prophecy from Hos_11:1 is fulfilled in Jesus. But Matthew makes it clear that even as Israel as a nation came out from Egypt, so does the Son of God.

2. (Mat_2:16-18) The Massacre of the Innocents.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."

a. **He sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts:** Though there are no exact descriptions of this event in secular history, it is entirely in character with Herod's well-known ruthlessness.

b. **A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning:** This quotation from Jer_31:15 originally referred to the mourning of Israel's mothers during the conquest and captivity of the nation. But here, **Rachel** is a picture of Bethlehem's mothers.

3. (Mat_2:19-21) The return to Israel.

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

a. **Arise, take the young Child and His mother:** God speaks to Joseph again in a dream, through **an angel of the Lord**. We also notice Joseph's quick obedience.

b. The young Child . . . the young Child . . . the young Child: Repeatedly, **the young Child** is given first place in the account.

4. (Mat_2:22-23) Fearing the evil son of Herod (**Archelaus**), they go north to Nazareth.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

a. The phrase **He shall be called a Nazarene** is not a Biblically recorded prophecy, but probably just a well known rabbinical prophecy or interpretation.

b. He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets: Since to take the vow of a **Nazarene** was a special mark of holiness, it seemed natural that the Messiah would be a Nazarene. But Matthew shows how this was true in a different way - Jesus was from the city of Nazareth, and not a Nazarene through a vow.

c. Remember that Nazareth was a city which did not have a particularly good reputation (Joh_1:46). Yet God the Father did not feel it necessary to have Jesus come from a "good" city.

d. What about the "Hidden Years" of Jesus? It is vain to speculate here on what God chose to keep silent; many people who want to distort the Biblical Jesus insert whatever they want during those "silent years" to make Jesus conform to their weird notions. If those years were important, God would have told us.

(Mat 2:2) saying, "Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose⁶ and have come to worship him."

(Mat 2:3) When King Herod⁷ heard this he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him.

(Mat 2:4) After assembling all the chief priests and experts in the law,⁸ he asked them where the Christ⁹ was to be born.

(Mat 2:5) "In Bethlehem of Judea," they said, "for it is written this way by the prophet: (Mat 2:6) ' ***And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are in no way least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.*** ' "¹⁰

(Mat 2:7) Then Herod¹¹ privately summoned the wise men and determined from them when the star had appeared.

(Mat 2:8) He¹² sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and look carefully for the child. When you find him, inform me so that I can go and worship him as well."

(Mat 2:9) After listening to the king they left, and once again¹³ the star they saw when it rose¹⁴ led them until it stopped above the place where the child was.

(Mat 2:10) When they saw the star they shouted joyfully.¹⁵

(Mat 2:11) As they came into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, they bowed down¹⁶ and worshiped him. They opened their treasure boxes and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense,¹⁷ and myrrh.¹⁸

(Mat 2:12) After being warned in a dream not to return to Herod,¹⁹ they went back by another route to their own country.

(Mat 2:13) ***The Escape to Egypt***

After they had gone, an²⁰ angel of the Lord²¹ appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod²² is going to look for the child to kill him."

(Mat 2:14) Then he got up, took the child and his mother during²³ the night, and went to Egypt.

(Mat 2:15) He stayed there until Herod²⁴ died. In this way what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet was fulfilled: " ***I called my***

***Son out of Egypt.*"²⁵**

(Mat 2:16) When Herod²⁶ saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he became enraged. He sent men²⁷ to kill all the children in Bethlehem²⁸ and throughout the surrounding region from the age of two and under, according to the time he had learned from the wise men.

(Mat 2:17) Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

(Mat 2:18) "***A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud wailing,*** ²⁹

***Rachel weeping for her children,
and she did not want to be comforted, because they
were*** ³⁰ ***gone.*** "³¹

(Mat 2:19) ***The Return to Nazareth***

After Herod³² had died, an³³ angel of the Lord³⁴ appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt (Mat 2:20) saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead."

(Mat 2:21) So³⁵ he got up and took the child and his mother and returned to the land of Israel.

(Mat 2:22) But when he heard that Archelaus³⁶ was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod,³⁷ he was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream, he went to the regions of Galilee.

(Mat 2:23) He came to a town called Nazareth³⁸ and lived there. Then what had been spoken by the prophets was fulfilled, that Jesus³⁹

would be called a Nazarene.⁴⁰

(Mat 3:1) ***The Ministry of John the Baptist***

In those days John the Baptist came into the wilderness¹ of Judea proclaiming,

(Guzik)

Mat 3:1-17

MATTHEW 3 - THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

A. The public ministry of John the Baptist.

1. (Mat_3:1-2) The message of John the Baptist.

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

a. **Repent**: John's message was a call to repentance. Some people think that repentance is mostly about *feelings*, especially feeling sorry for your sin. It is wonderful to feel sorry about your sin, but **repent** isn't a "feelings" word. It is an *action* word. Jesus told us to make a change of the mind, not merely to feel sorry for what we have done. Repentance speaks of a change of direction, not a sorrow in the heart.

i. Is repentance something we must *do* before we can come to God? Yes and no; repentance does not describe something we must do before we come to God, it describes what coming to God is like. If you are in New York, and I tell you to come to Los Angeles, I don't really need to say "Leave New York and come to Los Angeles." To come to Los Angeles *is* to leave New York, and if I haven't left New York, I certainly haven't come to Los Angeles. We can't come to the **kingdom of heaven** unless we leave our sin and the self-life.

b. **For the kingdom of heaven is at hand**: John wanted people to know that **the kingdom of heaven** was *near* - as close as your **hand**. It wasn't as distant or as dreamy as they had imagined. This is why John was so urgent in his call to repentance. If the **kingdom of heaven is at hand**, then we must get ready *now*.

2. (Mat_3:3-4) The identity of John the Baptist.

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.'" And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

a. **Prepare the way of the Lord**: Matthew uses this passage from Isa_40:3 to identify John the Baptist as the

prophesied forerunner of the Messiah. In this role, John's purpose was to **prepare** hearts for the Messiah, and to bring an awareness of sin among Israel so they could receive the salvation from sin offered by the Messiah (Mat_1:12).

b. **Make His paths straight:** The passage Mark quotes from (Isa_40:3) has in mind building up a great road for the arrival of a majestic king. The idea is to fill in the holes, and knock down the hills that are in the way.

i. The idea of preparing the way of the Lord is a word picture, because the real preparation must take place in our hearts. Building a road is very much like the preparation God must do in our hearts. They are both expensive, they both must deal with many different problems and environments, and they both take an expert engineer.

ii. Jesus was the coming Messiah and King, and John the Baptist was the one **crying in the wilderness**, and through his message of repentance, he worked to **prepare the way of the Lord**. We often fail to appreciate how important the *preparing* work of the Lord is. Any great work of God begins with great *preparation*.

c. **Clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt:** In his personality and ministry, John the Baptist was patterned after the bold Elijah (2Ki_1:8), who fearlessly called Israel to repentance.

i. In the spirit of today's age, John's ministry would have been very different. He wouldn't start in the wilderness. He wouldn't dress funny. He wouldn't preach such a straightforward message. He would use marketing surveys and focus groups to hone his message and presentation. John wasn't motivated by the spirit of today's age, but by the Spirit of God.

3. (Mat_3:5-6) The success of John's ministry.

Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

a. **Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him:** John's ministry met with wonderful response. There were many people who recognized their sinfulness, their need to get ready for the Messiah, and were willing to *do* something about it.

i. John's main message wasn't "You're a sinner, you need to repent." John's main message was "*The Messiah is coming.*" The call to repentance was the *response* to the news that the Messiah was coming.

b. **And were baptized by him:** With baptism, John offered a ceremonial washing that confessed sin and *did something* to demonstrate repentance. Before we can gain the kingdom of heaven, we must recognize our poverty of spirit (Mat_5:3). This type of awareness of sin is the foundation for most revivals and awakenings.

i. Baptism simply means to "immerse or overwhelm." John didn't sprinkle when he came **baptizing**. As was the custom in some other Jewish ceremonial washings, John completely immersed those he baptized. "Naturally, therefore, the baptism was not a mere sprinkling with water, but a bath in which his whole body was bathed." (Barclay)

ii. Baptism was practiced in the Jewish community already in the form of ceremonial immersions; but typically, it was only among Gentiles who wished to become Jews. For a Jew in John's day to submit to baptism was essentially to say, "I confess that I am as far away from God as a Gentile and I need to get right with Him." This was a real work of the Holy Spirit.

iii. John's baptism might have been related to the Jewish practice of baptizing Gentile converts, or to some of the ceremonial washings practiced by the Jews of that day. Though it may have some links, at the same time it was *unique* - so unique that John simply became known as "the Baptizer." If there were a lot of people doing that, it wouldn't be a unique title.

iv. Is Christian baptism - the baptism we do today - just like John's? Christian baptism is like John's in the sense that it demonstrates repentance, but it is also more. It is being *baptized into Christ*, that is, into His death and resurrection (Rom_6:3).

4. (Mat_3:7-12) John's confrontation with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

a. **Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** John accuses them of wanting to *appear* anxious for the Messiah, but not truly repenting and preparing their hearts; John will demand **fruits worthy of repentance**.

i. Real repentance will show itself in life. It has to be a matter of *living* repentance, not just *talking* repentance.

b. **Do not think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father."** John warns them to stop trusting in their Jewish heritage because they must truly repent, not simply trust in Abraham's merits.

i. It was widely taught in that day that Abraham's merits were plenty for any Jew's salvation, that a Jewish person *couldn't* go to hell. John points out that these Pharisees and

Scribes are of a different family; they are a **brood of vipers** - meaning a family associated with serpents!

c. **I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:** John's baptism was one of **repentance**. In this regard, it was not identical to Christian baptism or *baptism into Christ* (Rom_6:3), which includes a demonstration of repentance and cleansing, but also recognizes the believer's identification with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Rom_6:3-4).

d. **Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry:** John recognizes his own place before Jesus. He is one **not worthy to carry** the **sandals** of Jesus, and he does not consider himself far above those whom he is calling to repentance, and he knows where he stands in relation to Jesus (instead of getting a big head because of the crowds he is drawing).

e. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor:** John warns them to prepare for the Messiah's coming, because He is coming with judgment.

i. **Baptize you with the Holy Spirit:** This is the promised out-pouring of the Holy Spirit promised with the New Covenant (Eze_37:14).

ii. **And fire:** To baptize with **fire** means to bring the fires of judgment, which will purify the pure, but destroy the wicked like **chaff**. **Chaff** is the worthless residue of a wheat stalk after the kernel of grain has been removed. These proud and unrepentant leaders are just as useless to God.

iii. The Jewish leaders thought that the Messiah would come with judgment, but only against Israel's enemies. They were blind in their self-righteous confidence that only others needed to get right with God.

B. John's ministry in baptizing Jesus.

1. (Mat_3:13-14) Jesus comes to John for baptism.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I

need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

a. **Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized:** This is a significant emergence of Jesus from his many years of obscurity. These first works in His public ministry carry great meaning in understanding the rest of His ministry.

b. **Jesus came:** No one compelled Jesus to be baptized. He came to John of His own accord.

c. **I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?** John recognized the inherent irony in this situation. Jesus had nothing to repent of, and it would be more appropriate for Jesus to baptize John!

2. (Mat_3:15) Jesus allows Himself to be baptized by John.

But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

a. **Permit it to be so for now:** Why did Jesus need to be baptized? The words **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness** imply that it was necessary for the plan of God, but why?

b. The purpose was for Jesus to completely identify Himself with sinful man. This is exactly what He did in His birth, His upbringing, and His death. So here, as John **allowed Him** to be, here is Jesus, standing again in the place of sinful man.

3. (Mat_3:16-17) The Divine witness to Jesus' status as the Son of God.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

a. **The heavens were opened:** It was important for God the Father to publicly demonstrate that Jesus'

baptism was not just like anyone else's, in the sense of being a display of repentance. It was *not* a display of

repentance, but instead it was a righteous identification with sinners, motivated by love, was *well pleasing* to the Father.

b. **The Spirit of God descending like a dove:** Significantly, this is an occasion when the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all manifested at the same time.

c. **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:** When this voice of God the Father spoke from heaven, everyone knew that Jesus was not just another man being baptized. They knew Jesus was the perfect (**in whom I am well pleased**) Son of God, identifying with sinful man. By this, everyone knew that Jesus was different. Jesus was baptized to be identified *with* sinful man, but He was also baptized to be identified *to* sinful man.

(Mat 3:2) "Repent,² for the kingdom of heaven is near."

(Mat 3:3) For he is the one about whom Isaiah the prophet had spoken:³

" ***The voice⁴ of one shouting in the wilderness,***

' ***Prepare the way for the Lord, make⁵ his paths straight.*** ' "⁶

(Mat 3:4) Now John wore clothing made from camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his diet consisted of locusts and wild honey.⁷

(Mat 3:5) Then people from Jerusalem,⁸ as well as all Judea and all the region around the Jordan, were going out to him, (Mat 3:6) and he was baptizing them⁹ in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

(Mat 3:7) But when he saw many Pharisees¹⁰ and Sadducees¹¹ coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

(Mat 3:8) Therefore produce fruit¹² that proves your¹³ repentance,

(Mat 3:9) and don't think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones!

(Mat 3:10) Even now the ax is laid at¹⁴ the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

(Mat 3:11) "I baptize you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am — I am not worthy¹⁵ to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹⁶

(Mat 3:12) His winnowing fork¹⁷ is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse,¹⁸

but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire."¹⁹

(Mat 3:13) ***The Baptism of Jesus***

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John to be baptized by him in the Jordan River.²⁰

(Mat 3:14) But John²¹ tried to prevent²² him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?"

(Mat 3:15) So Jesus replied²³ to him, "Let it happen now,²⁴ for it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John²⁵ yielded²⁶ to him.

(Mat 3:16) After²⁷ Jesus was baptized, just as he was coming up out of the water, the²⁸ heavens²⁹ opened³⁰ and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove³¹ and coming on him.

(Mat 3:17) And³² a voice from heaven said,³³ "This is my one dear Son;³⁴ in him³⁵ I take great delight."³⁶

(Mat 4:1) ***The Temptation of Jesus***

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness¹ to be tempted by the devil.

(Guzik)

Mat 4:1-25

MATTHEW 4 - THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS AND HIS FIRST GALILEAN MINISTRY

A. Jesus' temptation.

1. (Mat_4:1-2) Jesus is led to the place of temptation.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

a. **Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted:** After identifying with sinners in His baptism, Jesus now identifies with them in severe temptation. This was a necessary part of His ministry, so He truly was **led up by the Spirit into the wilderness**.

i. Jesus did not need to be tempted to help Him "grow." Instead, He endured temptation both so He could identify with us (Heb_2:18; Heb_4:15), and to demonstrate His own holy, sinless character.

ii. The Holy Spirit cannot tempt us (Jam_1:13). But we may be led by the Holy Spirit to a place where we will be tempted. This is not to prove anything to God (who knows all things), but to prove something to us and to spiritual beings who watch us.

b. **Tempted by the devil:** Temptation is a certainty for everyone. Yet Jesus' temptation was more severe.

It was more severe because He was tempted directly by **the devil** himself, while we contend mainly with lesser demons. It was also more severe because there is a sense in which temptation is "relieved" by giving in, and Jesus never did. Therefore He bore levels of temptation we will never know by experience.

c. **He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry:** Matthew points out both the barren desert (the Judean **wilderness** was, and is, just that), and Jesus' severe physical condition after such a long fast. It is said that when hunger pains return after such a fast (**He was hungry**), it indicates the subject is beginning to starve to death.

d. The period of **forty days and forty nights** is a familiar period of testing in the Bible, both in the days of Noah and for Israel in the wilderness. Jesus will succeed where Israel as a nation failed.

2. (Mat_4:3-4) The first temptation: an appeal to the lust of the flesh.

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

a. **When the tempter came:** Notice that Matthew writes **when the tempter came**. In our lives, it is not a question of *if* the tempter will come, but **when** he will come. We will face temptation until we go to glory.

b. **If You are the Son of God:** The question asked by Satan is more literally "*since You are the Son of God*," instead of "***if You are the Son of God***." Satan is not questioning Jesus' deity, he is challenging Him to prove it through miraculous works.

c. **Command that these stones become bread:** This is a temptation to use God's gifts for selfish purposes. Satan wants Jesus to use His miraculous powers to provide food for Himself.

i. Who could fault Jesus for providing food? This wasn't a temptation to miraculously create great riches or luxuries, only **bread**. The Bible has many accounts of miraculous provision, some at the hands of Jesus. Yet Jesus will not **command that these stones become bread**, especially at the instigation of Satan.

d. **But He answered:** Jesus didn't silently disagree with Satan, **He answered** him - and He answered him from the Word of God. When Jesus quotes Deu_8:3, Jesus shows that **every word that proceeds from the mouth of God** should be more precious to us than food itself.

i. What Satan suggested made sense - “Why starve yourself to death?” But what **is written** makes even more sense.

e. By relying on the power and truth of God’s Word, Jesus was willing to fight this battle as a man; He could have easily rebuked Satan into another galaxy, but resisted Him in a way that we can imitate and identify with.

i. Jesus used *Scripture* to battle Satan’s temptation, not some elaborate spiritual power inaccessible to us. Jesus fought this battle as a man in this battle, and He drew on no “special resources” unavailable to us.

ii. We effectively resist temptation in the same way Jesus did: by countering Satan’s seductive lies by shining the light of God’s truth upon them. If we are ignorant of God’s truth, we are poorly armed in the fight against temptation.

3. (Mat_4:5-7) The second temptation: an appeal to the pride of life.

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”

a. **If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down:** Satan is tempting Jesus to “force” the Father into a supernatural event. Satan appeals to the desire within every man to sense approval from God and to have that approval publicly demonstrated.

i. **Set Him on the pinnacle of the temple:** The **pinnacle of the temple** arose some 200 feet from the floor of the Kidron Valley. A leap from there, and the appearance of the promised angelic protection, would be quite a show!

ii. Jesus just had this kind of spectacular demonstration at His baptism (Mat_3:17). But that must have seemed far away after forty days and nights of fasting in the wilderness.

b. **For it is written:** The devil can use this phrase also. He quotes Scripture, and we can trust that the devil has memorized the Bible himself, and is an expert at quoting it out of its context to confuse and defeat those he tempts. This time, the devil quoted Psa_91:11-12, and took it out of its context to say, “Go ahead, Jesus; if You do this the Bible promises angels will rescue You, and it will be spectacular self-promotion.”

i. Sadly, many are willing to believe anyone who quotes from the Bible today. A preacher can pretty much say whatever he wants if he quotes a few “proof-texts,” and people will assume that he really speaks from the Bible.

ii. Jesus understood from His knowledge of the *whole counsel of God* (Act_20:27) that Satan was “twisting” this passage from Psalms 91. Jesus knew how to rightly divide the word of truth (2Ti_2:15).

c. **It is written again, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.”** Jesus replied with Scripture, but applied correctly. He knew that “forcing” or manipulating God the Father into such a demonstration would **tempt** God, which the Scriptures strictly forbid.

i. This warns us against demanding something “spectacular” from God to “prove” His love or concern for us. He has already given the ultimate demonstration of His love for us at the cross (Rom_5:8), and He can do nothing more “spectacular” than that.

4. (Mat_4:8-11) The third temptation: an appeal to the lust of the eyes.

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

a. **All these things I will give You:** Essentially, this vision invited Jesus to take a shortcut around the cross. Jesus came to win **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory** back from Satan's domain, and Satan offers them to Jesus, if He will only **fall down and worship** him.

i. It again may seem a small thing; Jesus could lay claim to **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory**, and do so without enduring the cross. All He would have to do is give Satan what he has been longing for ever since he fell from glorious to profane: **worship** and recognition from God Himself.

ii. This is a revealing insight into Satan's heart; worship and recognition are far more precious to him than the possession of **the kingdoms of the world and their glory**. He is still the one who said *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* (Isa_14:13-14)

b. Evidently, Satan *has* authority over this world and its governments. The temptation could not have been real unless there is some real sense that Satan does "possess" **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory**.

i. Adam and his descendants gave the devil this authority. God gave Adam the earth as a stewardship (Gen_1:28-30), and Adam willingly turned it over to Satan. After that, all Adam's descendants cast their vote of approval by their personal sin.

ii. Of course, ultimately, all things belong to God; but God allows Satan to function as *the god of this age* (2Co_4:4) for a purpose. This is why the fallen world is in the mess it is.

c. **Away with you, Satan! For it is written:** Jesus replied with Scripture again, and commanded the devil to leave. In the same way we can *resist the devil and he will flee from you* (Jam_4:7). It worked for Jesus (**Then the devil left Him**) and it will work for us.

d. **Behold, angels came and ministered to Him:** God never forsakes those who endure through temptation. Even as **angels came and ministered to** Jesus, God will find a way to minister to us and meet our needs as we endure temptation.

e. **Then the devil left Him** means that Jesus won. He won because He recognized Satan's mode of attack: lies and deception. Primarily, Satan is a deceiver, and for those who live in light of the cross, deception is his only tool, because demonic powers were disarmed at the cross of their "real" weapons and power (Col_2:15). But deception is extremely effective at leading us into sin, and at causing us to live lives of fear and unbelief.

i. Jesus showed the only effective counter to deception: God's truth, not man's wisdom. First, we must see temptation for what it is - a lie. Then, we must combat temptation with the word of God. Then, we must always build ourselves up in the truth, and have it in our heart.

ii. Each passage Jesus quoted back to Satan in this section comes from Deuteronomy chapters 6 and 8. Jesus was probably meditating on those very passages, and He fought Satan with the "fresh bread" He fed on. We should make sure we always have some "fresh bread" to answer Satan with.

B. The first Galilean ministry.

1. (Mat_4:12-16) In fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus brings light to the region of Galilee.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, *by* the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

a. **He departed to Galilee:** The region of **Galilee** was a fertile, progressive, highly populated region.

According to figures from the Jewish historian Josephus, there were some 3 million people populating Galilee, an area smaller than the state of Connecticut.

i. In an area of about 60 by 30 miles, Josephus says that there were some 204 villages with none having less than 15,000 people. That gives a population of more than 3 million for the region.

ii. Galilee was predominately Gentile in its population, but with a large number of Jewish cities and citizens. Also, Galilee was known as an incredibly fertile region. Many successful farms took advantage of the good soil.

b. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet:** As is his custom, Matthew sees Jesus' ministry in Galilee as a fulfillment of prophecy. **Light** has come to this region, largely populated by Gentiles, and Isa_9:1-2 predicted this of the ministry of the Messiah.

2. (Mat_4:17) Jesus' message: **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

a. **Repent:** The gospel Jesus preached began the same place that the gospel John preached began - with a call to *repentance* (Mat_3:2). In fact, since Jesus waited until John *had been put in prison* (Mat_4:12), He probably saw Himself as picking up where John left off. But Jesus would go further than John ever did, because John announced the coming of the Messiah, and Jesus is the Messiah.

b. **For the kingdom of heaven is at hand:** Some people make elaborate distinctions between **the kingdom of heaven** and *the kingdom of God*. There actually seems to be no difference at all, especially in light of the Jewish custom of often not even naming God directly, but referring to Him by the place where He lives **heaven** - a custom that Matthew, a Jew writing to Jews, often employs.

3. (Mat_4:18-22) Four men are called as disciples.

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

a. **Saw two brothers:** This was not the first time Jesus met these men, and other gospels describe previous encounters. But this is when Jesus called them to leave their professions and follow Him "full-time."

b. **Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men:** In that day, it was customary for a rabbi to have disciples; there was nothing "cult-like" about Jesus asking these men to be with Him constantly. In effect, He offers them scholarships in the best "seminary" imaginable.

i. This is a good way to teach someone ministry: in an "apprentice" fashion rather than through formal education and it was the customary method in Jesus' day.

c. **The immediately left their nets . . . And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him:** The *immediate* response of these disciples is a great example to us. Then the first disciples did what all disciples of Jesus should do: they **followed Him**.

4. (Mat_4:23-25) A description of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

Great multitudes followed Him; from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

a. **Preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness:** Jesus was a *teacher* who did miraculous works. The emphasis was always on His teaching ministry, both to the inner circle of His disciples and to the multitudes that would listen to Him.

b. **All kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease:** Jesus' ability to heal those with all different kinds of diseases demonstrates that He has authentic power over the damage done by the fall of man. His authority over demons (**and those who were demon-possessed**) shows He has authentic power over all creation.

c. **Great multitudes followed Him:** Jesus had a purpose for allowing such dramatic miracles to attract **great multitudes**. He wanted to teach the multitudes, not simply to impress them with miracles.

(Mat 4:2) After he fasted forty days and forty nights he was famished.²

(Mat 4:3) The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread."³

(Mat 4:4) But he answered,⁴ "It is written, ' **Man ⁵ does not live ⁶ by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**' "⁷

(Mat 4:5) Then the devil took him to the holy city,⁸ had him stand⁹ on the highest point¹⁰ of the temple, (Mat 4:6) and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written, ' **He will command his angels concerning you**'¹¹ and ' **with their hands they will lift you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**' "¹²

(Mat 4:7) Jesus said to him, "Once again it is written: ' **You are not to put the Lord your God to the test.**' "¹³

(Mat 4:8) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their

grandeur.¹⁴

(Mat 4:9) And he said to him, "I will give you all these things if you throw yourself to the ground and worship¹⁵ me."

(Mat 4:10) Then Jesus said to him, "Go away,¹⁶ Satan! For it is written: '**You are to worship the Lord your God and serve only him.**' "¹⁷

(Mat 4:11) Then the devil left him, and angels¹⁸ came and began ministering to his needs.

(Mat 4:12) **Preaching in Galilee**

Now when Jesus¹⁹ heard that John had been imprisoned,²⁰ he went into Galilee.

(Mat 4:13) While in Galilee, he moved from Nazareth²¹ to make his home in Capernaum²² by the sea,²³ in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, (Mat 4:14) so that what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled:²⁴

(Mat 4:15) "**Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles —**

(Mat 4:16) **the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light,:**

and on those who sit in the region and shadow of death a light has dawned. "²⁵

(Mat 4:17) From that time Jesus began to preach this message:²⁶ "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

(Mat 4:18) **The Call of the Disciples**

As²⁷ he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishermen).²⁸

(Mat 4:19) He said to them, "Follow me, and I will turn you into fishers of people."²⁹

(Mat 4:20) They³⁰ left their nets immediately and followed him.³¹

(Mat 4:21) Going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in a boat³²

with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. Then³³ he called them.

(Mat 4:22) They³⁴ immediately left the boat and their father and followed him.

(Mat 4:23) ***Jesus' Healing Ministry***

Jesus³⁵ went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,³⁶ preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people.

(Mat 4:24) So a report about him spread throughout Syria. People³⁷ brought to him all who suffered with various illnesses and afflictions, those who had seizures,³⁸ paralytics, and those possessed by demons,³⁹ and he healed them.

(Mat 4:25) And large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis,⁴⁰ Jerusalem,⁴¹ Judea, and beyond the Jordan River.⁴²

(Mat 5:1) ***The Beatitudes***

When¹ he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain.² After he sat down his disciples came to him.

(Guzik)

Mat 5:1-48

MATTHEW 5 - THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

A. Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount.

1. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 through 7) has been long hailed as the sum of Jesus' - or anyone's - ethical teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us how to live.

a. It has been said if you took all the good advice for how to live ever uttered by any philosopher or psychiatrist or counselor, took out the foolishness and boiled it all down to the real essentials, you would be left with a poor imitation of this great message by Jesus.

2. The Sermon on the Mount is sometimes thought of as Jesus' "Declaration of the Kingdom."

a. The American Revolutionaries had their *Declaration of Independence*. Karl Marx had his *Communist Manifesto*. With this message, Jesus declares what His Kingdom is all about.

b. It presents a radically different agenda than what the nation of Israel expected from the Messiah. It does not present the political or material blessings of the Messiah's reign. Instead, it expresses the spiritual implications of Jesus' rule in our lives. This great message tells us how will we live when Jesus is our Lord.

3. The Sermon on the Mount does not deal with salvation as such, but it lays out for the disciple and the potential disciple how regarding Jesus as King translates into ethics and daily living.

a. It can't be proved, but in my opinion, the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' "standard" sermon. It was the core of His itinerant message: a simple proclamation of how God expects us to live, contrasting with common Jewish misunderstandings of that life. It may be that when Jesus preached to a new audience, He often preached this sermon or used the themes from it.

b. It is clear that the Sermon on the Mount had a significant impact on the early church. The early Christians make constant reference to it and their lives display the glory of radical disciples.

4. (Mat_5:1-2) Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount.

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

a. **When He was seated:** As He preached this message, Jesus was **seated**. He adopted the customary posture of teaching, as any rabbi in His day - the preacher sat and the audience stood.

b. **His disciples came to Him . . . He . . . taught them:** We notice that Jesus primarily speaks to His disciples. The Sermon on the Mount is directed towards **disciples**, though others may - and should - hear.

By the end of the Sermon on the Mount, people in general hear His message and are amazed (Mat_7:28).

B. The Beatitudes: the character of kingdom citizens.

1. The first portion of the Sermon on the Mount is known as the Beatitudes, which means “The Blessings” but can also be understood as giving the believer his “be - attitudes” - the attitudes he should “be.”

a. In the Beatitudes, Jesus sets forth both the *nature* and the *aspirations* of citizens of His kingdom. They *have* and are *learning* these character traits.

b. *All* of these character traits are marks and goals of *all* Christians. It is not as if we can major in one to the exclusion of others, as is the case with spiritual gifts. There is no escape from our responsibility to covet every one of these spiritual attributes.

c. If you meet one who claims to be a Christian but displays and desires none of these traits, you may rightly wonder about their salvation, because they do not have the character of kingdom citizens. But if they claim to have mastered these attributes, you may question their honesty.

2. (Mat_5:3) The foundation: poverty of spirit.

“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

a. **Blessed**: Jesus promises blessing to His disciples, promising that the **poor in spirit** will be **blessed**.

The idea behind the ancient Greek word for **blessed** is “*happy*,” but in the truest, godly sense of the word, not in our modern sense of merely being comfortable or entertained at the moment.

b. **The poor in spirit**: This is not a man’s confession that he is by nature insignificant, or personally without value, for that would be untrue. Instead, it is a confession that he *is* sinful and rebellious and utterly without moral virtues adequate to commend him to God.

c. The **poor in spirit** recognize that they have no spiritual “assets.” They know they are spiritually bankrupt. With the

word **poor**, Jesus uses the more severe term for poverty. It indicates someone who must *beg* for whatever they have or get.

i. Poverty of spirit cannot be artificially induced by self-hatred; it is brought about by the Holy Spirit and our response to His working in our hearts.

d. **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven:** Those who are **poor in spirit**, so poor they must beg, are rewarded. They receive **the kingdom of heaven**, and poverty of spirit is an absolute prerequisite for receiving the kingdom of heaven, because as long as we harbor illusions about our own spiritual resources we will never receive from God what we absolutely need to be saved.

e. The call to be **poor in spirit** is placed first for a reason, because it puts the following commands into perspective. They cannot be fulfilled by one's own strength, but only by a beggar's reliance on God's power.

3. (Mat_5:4) The godly reaction to poverty of spirit: mourning.

"Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

a. **Blessed are those who mourn:** The ancient Greek grammar indicates an intense degree of mourning.

Jesus does not speak of casual sorrow for the consequences of our sin, but a deep grief before God over our fallen state.

b. What do **those who mourn** actually **mourn** about? Their mourning is over just anything, but they mourn over sin. To really be followers of Jesus, we must **mourn** over our sin and the ruin and separation from God that comes to our life from sin.

i. We also **mourn** the general destruction and separation sin brings, far beyond the personal consequences to ourselves.

c. **For they shall be comforted:** Those who **mourn** over their sin and their sinful condition are promised comfort. God allows this grief into our lives as a path, not as a destination.

4. (Mat_5:5) The next step: meekness.

“Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

a. **Blessed are the meek:** In the vocabulary of the ancient Greek language, the **meek** person was not passive or easily pushed around. The main idea behind the word “**meek**” was strength under control, like a strong stallion that was trained to do the job instead of running wild.

b. To be **meek** means to show willingness to submit and work under proper authority. It also shows a willingness to disregard one’s own “rights” and privileges.

i. It is one thing for me to admit my own spiritual bankruptcy, but what if someone else does it for me? Do I react meekly?

c. **For they shall inherit the earth:** We can only be **meek**, willing to control our desire for our rights and privileges because we are confident God watches out for us, that He will protect our cause. The promise “**they shall inherit the earth**” proves that God will not allow His **meek** ones to end up on the short end of the deal.

d. Through the first three beatitudes we notice that the *natural* man finds no happiness or blessedness in spiritual poverty, mourning or meekness. These are only a blessing for the *spiritual* man, those who are new creatures in Jesus.

5. (Mat_5:6) The desire of the one who has poverty of spirit, mourning for sin, and meekness: righteousness.

“Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

a. **Blessed are those who hunger:** This describes a profound hunger that cannot be satisfied by a snack.

This is a longing that endures and is never completely satisfied on this side of eternity.

b. **Hunger and thirst for righteousness:** We see Christians hungering for many things: power, authority, success, comfort, happiness - but how many **hunger and thirst for righteousness?**

i. This is hunger for *complete* righteousness, not just enough to soothe a guilty conscience.

c. **For they shall be filled:** This is a strange filling that both satisfies us and keeps us longing for more.

6. (Mat_5:7-9) How the previously mentioned character traits display themselves among men.

“Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

a. **Blessed are the merciful:** The **merciful** care and reach out to help those that are in need, without demanding that they deserve such help.

i. **For they shall obtain mercy:** If you want mercy from others - especially God - then you should take care to be **merciful** to others.

b. **Blessed are the pure in heart:** In the ancient Greek, the phrase **pure of heart** has the idea of straightness, honesty, and clarity. This describes someone who isn't constantly “dirty” from all the little “stains” that come from contact with this world.

i. **For they shall see God:** In this, the **pure of heart** receive the most wonderful reward.

They shall enjoy greater intimacy with God than they could have imagined.

ii. Ultimately, this intimate relationship with God must become our greatest motivation for purity, greater than a fear of getting caught or a fear of consequences.

c. **Blessed are the peacemakers:** This does not describe those who *live* in peace, but those who actually bring about peace, overcoming evil with good.

i. One way we accomplish this is through spreading the gospel, because God has entrusted to us the *ministry of reconciliation* (2Co_5:18).

ii. **For they shall be called sons of God:** The reward of **peacemakers** is that they are recognized as true children of God. They share His passion for peace and reconciliation, the breaking down of walls between people.

d. The character traits described in the Beatitudes are not valued by our modern culture. We don't recognize or give awards to the "Most Pure in Heart" or "Most Poor in Spirit." Though our culture doesn't think much of these character traits, they do described the character of the citizens of God's kingdom.

7. (Mat_5:10-12) The world's reception of these kind of people: persecution.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

a. **Blessed are those who are persecuted:** For what sake are these blessed ones persecuted? For **righteousness' sake** and for Jesus' sake (**for My sake**), not for their own stupidity or fanaticism.

i. Peter recognizes that suffering comes to some Christians for reasons other than their faithfulness to Jesus (1Pe_4:15-16).

b. **Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake:** Jesus brings insults and spoken malice into the sphere of persecution. We cannot limit our idea of persecution to only physical opposition or torture.

c. **Rejoice and be exceedingly glad:** Literally, we could translate this phrase to say that the persecuted should "leap for joy." Why? Because the persecuted will have great **reward in heaven**, and because the persecuted are in good company: the **prophets** before them were also persecuted.

d. Why will the world persecute them? Because the values and character expressed in these Beatitudes are so opposite to the world's manner of thinking. Our persecution may not

be much compared to others, but if *no one* speaks evil of you, are these Beatitudes traits of your life?

C. Where Jesus wants His disciples to display their discipleship.

1. (Mat_5:13) The followers of Jesus should be like salt.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

a. **You are the salt of the earth:** Disciples are like **salt** because they are *precious*. In Jesus’ day, salt was a valued commodity. Roman soldiers were sometimes paid with salt, giving rise to the phrase “worth his salt.”

b. **You are the salt of the earth:** Disciples are like **salt** because they have a preserving influence. Salt was used to preserve meats, and to retard decay, and Christians should have a preserving influence on their culture.

c. **You are the salt of the earth:** Disciples are like **salt** because they add flavor. Christians should be a “flavorful” people.

d. **If the salt loses its flavor . . . it is then good for nothing:** Salt must keep its “saltiness” to be of any value. When it is no good as salt, it is **trampled under foot**. In the same way, too many Christians lose their “flavor” and become good for nothing.

2. (Mat_5:14-16) The followers of Jesus should be like light.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

a. **You are the light of the world:** Jesus gives the Christian both a great compliment and a great responsibility when He says that *we* are the light of the world, because He claimed that title for Himself as He walked this earth (Joh_8:12 and Joh_9:5).

b. **Let your light so shine before men:** The purpose of light is to illuminate and expose what is there.

Therefore light must be exposed before it is of any use - if it is hidden **under a basket**, it is no longer useful.

i. **Cannot be hidden:** Just like **a city that is set on a hill**, it goes against the very nature and purpose of light for it to be **hidden**. When a Christian hides his light, he fights himself and the Holy Spirit by never letting his **light so shine before men**.

ii. **But on a lampstand:** Even as lamps are placed higher so their light can be more effective, we should look for ways to let our light shine in greater and broader ways.

c. **That they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven:** The purpose in letting our **light so shine** by doing **good works** is so that others will glorify God, not ourselves.

d. A key thought in both the pictures of salt and light is *distinction*. Salt is needed because the world is rotting and decaying and if our Christianity is also rotting and decaying, it won't be any good. Light is needed because the world is in darkness, and if our Christianity imitates the darkness, we have nothing to show the world.

i. To be effective we must seek and display the Christian *distinctive*. We can never affect the world for Jesus by becoming like the world.

e. The figures of salt and light also remind us that the life marked by the beatitudes is not to be lived in isolation. We often assume that those inner qualities can only be developed or displayed in isolation from the world, but Jesus wants us to live them out before the world.

f. Jesus points to a breadth in the impact of disciples that must have seemed almost ridiculous at the time.

How could these humble Galileans salt the *earth*, or light the *world*? But they did.

g. Jesus never challenges us to *become* salt or light. He simply says that we *are* - and we are either fulfilling or

failing that responsibility.

D. The law and true righteousness.

1. (Mat_5:17-18) Jesus' relation to the law.

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

a. **Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets:** Jesus here begins a long discussion of the law, and wants to make it clear that He does not oppose the Law of Moses, but He will free it from the way the Pharisees and Scribes wrongly interpreted the law.

b. **I did not come to destroy but to fulfill:** Jesus wants to make it clear that He has authority apart from the Law of Moses, but not in contradiction to it. Jesus added nothing to the law except one thing that no man had ever added to the law: perfect obedience. This is certainly one way Jesus came **to fulfill** the law.

i. Even though He often challenged man's interpretations of the law (especially Sabbath regulations), Jesus never broke the law of God.

c. **One jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled:** The **jot** and the **tittle** were small punctuation marks in Hebrew writing. It is as if Jesus says, "Not one dot of an "i" or not one cross of a "t" will pass away till all is fulfilled. And indeed, Jesus did perfectly fulfill the law.

i. Jesus **fulfilled** the doctrinal teachings of the law in that He brought full revelation.

ii. Jesus **fulfilled** the predictive prophecy of the law in that He is the Promised One, showing the reality behind the shadows.

iii. Jesus **fulfilled** the ethical precepts of the law in that He fully obeyed them and He reinterpreted them in their truth.

3. (Mat_5:19-20) The disciple's relationship to the law.

“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

a. **Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments:** The **commandments** are to be obeyed as explained and fulfilled by Jesus’ life and teaching, not as in the legalistic thinking of the religious authorities of Jesus’ day. For example, sacrifice is commanded by the law, but it was fulfilled in Jesus, so we do not run the danger of being **called least in the kingdom of heaven** by not observing animal sacrifice as detailed in the Law of Moses.

b. **Whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven:** The Christian is done with the law as a means of gaining a righteous standing before God. One passage that explains this is Gal_2:21 : *For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.* However, the law stands as the perfect expression of God’s ethical character and requirements.

i. The law sends us to Jesus to be justified, because it shows us our inability to please God in ourselves. But after we come to Jesus, He sends us back to the law to learn the heart of God for our conduct and sanctification.

c. **Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven:** Considering the incredible devotion to the law shown by the **scribes and Pharisees**, how can we ever hope to exceed their righteousness?

i. The Pharisees were so scrupulous in their keeping of the law that they would even tithe from the small spices obtained from their herb gardens (Mat_23:23). The heart of this devotion to God is shown by modern day Orthodox Jews.

In early 1992, tenants let three apartments in an Orthodox neighborhood in Israel burn to the ground while they asked a rabbi whether a telephone call to the fire department on the Sabbath violated Jewish law.

Observant Jews are forbidden to use the phone on the Sabbath, because doing so would break an electrical current, which is considered a form of work. In the half-hour it took the rabbi to decide “yes,” the fire spread to two neighboring apartments.

ii. We can exceed their **righteousness** because our righteousness exceeds that of **the scribes and Pharisees** in *kind*, not *degree*. Paul describes the two kinds of righteousness in Php_3:6-9 : *Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, [I was] blameless. But what things were gain to me, I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed, I count all things loss . . . that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.*

iii. Though the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was impressive to human observation, it could not prevail before God (Isa_64:6).

d. So then, we are not made righteous by keeping the law. When we see what keeping the law *really* means, we are thankful that Jesus offers us a different kind of righteousness.

E. Jesus interprets the law in its truth.

1. In this section, Jesus shows the true meaning of the law. But this isn't Jesus *against* Moses; it is Jesus against false and superficial interpretations of Moses.

a. In regard to the law, the two errors of the scribes and Pharisees were that they both *restricted* God's commands (as in the law of murder) and *extended* the commands of God past His intention (as in the law of divorce).

b. The people Jesus spoke to only knew of the Bible what these scribes had told them. They didn't - and couldn't -

read God's Word for themselves. We certainly don't have the same excuse.

2. (Mat_5:21-22) Jesus interprets the law against murder.

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."

a. **You have heard it said:** These people had not really studied the Law of Moses for themselves. All they had was the teaching on the law from the scribes and Pharisees. In this particular matter, the people had heard the scribes and Pharisees teach **"You shall not murder."**

b. **But I say to you:** Jesus shows His authority, and does not rely on the words of previous scribes or teachers. He will teach them the true understanding of the Law of Moses.

c. **Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:** The teaching of the scribes and Pharisees (**"You shall not murder"**) was true enough. Yet they also taught that anything *short* of murder might be allowed. Jesus corrects this, and makes it clear that it is not only those who commit the *act* of murder who are in danger of judgment. Those who have a murderous intent in the heart are also **in danger of the judgment**.

i. Jesus exposes the essence of the scribes' heresy. To them, the law was really only a matter of *external performance*, never the heart. Jesus brings the law back to the matters of the heart.

ii. We should emphasize that Jesus is *not* saying that anger is as bad as murder. It's ridiculous to think that someone who shouts at another person in anger has sinned as badly as someone who murders another person in anger does. Jesus is emphasizing that the law condemns *both*, without saying that the law says they are the *same things*.

c. **And whoever says to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council:** To call someone “**Raca**” expressed contempt for their intelligence. Calling someone a **fool** showed contempt for their character. Either one broke the *heart* of the law against murder, even if it did not commit murder.

i. Commentators have translated the idea behind **Raca** as “nitwit, blockhead, numbskull, bonehead, brainless idiot.”

3. (Mat_5:23-26) More on problem personal relationships.

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”

a. **Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way:** Jesus considers it far more important to be reconciled to a brother than to perform a religious duty. Jesus says we must **first be reconciled to your brother**. We can’t think that our service towards the Lord justifies bad relationships with others. We should do what Paul commanded in Rom_12:18 : *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

b. **Agree with your adversary quickly:** Jesus commands us to **quickly** settle anger and malice with another. When we ignore it or pass it off, it genuinely imprisons us (**and you be thrown into prison**).

i. Paul expresses the same idea in Eph_4:26-27. When we hold on to our anger against another (*do not let the sun go down on your wrath*) we sin - and we *give place to the devil*.

4. (Mat_5:27-28) Jesus interprets the law against adultery.

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at

a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

a. **You have heard that it was said to those of old:**

Now, Jesus deals with what they had **heard** regarding the law of adultery. Of course, the teachers of the day taught that **adultery** itself was wrong. But they applied the law only to the actions, not to the heart.

b. **Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart:**

Jesus explains that it is possible to commit adultery or murder in our heart - or mind, and this also is sin and prohibited by the command against adultery.

i. Jesus *is not* saying that the act of adultery and adultery in the heart are the same thing.

More than a few people have been deceived on this point, and say “I’ve already committed adultery in my heart, so I may as well do it in practice.” The act of adultery is *far worse* than adultery in the heart. Jesus’ point is not to say they are the same things, but to say they are both sin, and both prohibited by the command against adultery.

ii. Some people only keep from adultery because they are afraid to get caught, and in their heart they commit adultery every day. It is good that they keep from the act of adultery, but it is bad that their heart is filled with adultery.

iii. This principle applies to much more than men looking at women. It applies to just about anything we can covet with the eye or mind.

c. **Adultery . . . in his heart:** Since Jesus considers adultery in the heart a sin, we know what we *think about* and allow our heart to *rest on* is based on *choice*. Many believe they have no choice - and therefore no responsibility - for what they think about, but this contradicts the clear teaching of Jesus here. We may not be able to control *passing* thoughts or feelings, but we certainly do decide where our heart and mind will *rest*.

5. (Mat_5:29-30) Our attitude in the war against sin.

“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

a. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out:

Here Jesus uses a figure of speech, and did not speak literally. Sadly, some have taken it so and have mutilated themselves in mistaken efforts in the pursuit of holiness. For example, the famous early Christian named Origen's castrated himself on the principle of this passage.

i. The trouble with a literal interpretation is that it does not go far enough! Even if you did cut off your hand or gouge out your eye, you could still sin with your other hand or eye. When all those are gone, you can especially sin with your mind.

b. It is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell: Jesus simple stresses the point that one must be willing to sacrifice to be obedient. If part of our life is given over to sin, we must be convinced that it is more profitable for that part our life to “die” rather than to condemn our whole life.

i. This is the one thing many are unwilling to do, and that is why they remain trapped in sin, or never come to Jesus. They never get beyond a vague wish to be better.

6. (Mat_5:31-32) Jesus interprets the law concerning divorce. “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.’”

a. It has been said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce” : In Jesus' day,

many people interpreted the Mosaic permission for divorce (Deu_24:1) as granting virtually any reason as grounds for divorce. Some rabbis taught this even extended to allowing a man to divorce his wife if she burnt his breakfast.

b. **Whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality:** The issue of divorce revolved around a strict or loose interpretation of the word *uncleanness* in Deu_24:1. Those who wanted to make divorce easy had a loose interpretation. Jesus makes it plain that the idea of *uncleanness* is **sexual immorality**, not anything the wife might do to displease the husband.

i. Jesus teaches more fully on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19, but here we see the intent of Jesus: getting back to the intent of the law, instead of allowing it to be used as easy permission for divorce.

c. **Causes her to commit adultery:** An illegitimate divorce gives place to **adultery** because God doesn't recognize the divorce, and sees a new relationship as bigamous. It is possible for a person to have a divorce that is recognized by the *state*, but not by *God*. If that person goes on to marry someone else, God considers that relationship **adultery** because He sees them as still married.

7. (Mat_5:33-37) Jesus interprets the law concerning oaths.

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."

a. **You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not swear falsely"** : The scribes and Pharisees had twisted the law *You shall not take the name of the Lord*

your God in vain (Exo_20:7) to permit taking virtually every other name in a false oath.

b. **Do not swear at all:** Jesus reminds us that God is part of every oath anyway; if you swear by **heaven, earth, Jerusalem**, or even **your head**, you swear by God - and your oath must be honored.

c. **But let your “Yes” be “Yes”** : Having to swear or make oaths betrays the weakness of your word. It demonstrates that there is not enough weight in your own character to confirm your words. How much better it is to let your **“Yes” be “Yes”** and **“No” be “No.”**

8. (Mat_5:38-42) Jesus interprets the law of retribution.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”

a. **You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”** : The Mosaic law did teach *an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth* (Exo_21:24). But over time religious teachers moved this command out of its proper sphere (a principle *limiting* retribution for the civil government) and put it in the wrong sphere (as an *obligation* in personal relationships).

b. **But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also:** Here, Jesus presents the fullness of the **eye for an eye** law, and how its idea of limiting revenge extends into the principle of accepting certain evil against one’s self.

i. When a person insults us (**slaps you on the right cheek**) we want to give them back what they gave to us, plus more. Jesus says we should patiently bear such insults

and offences, and not **resist an evil person** who insults us this way. Instead, we trust God to defend us.

ii. It is wrong to think Jesus means evil should never be resisted. Jesus demonstrated with His life that evil should and must be resisted, such as when He turned tables in the temple.

iii. It is wrong to think that Jesus means a physical attack cannot be resisted or defended against. When Jesus speaks of a slap **on your right cheek**, that was culturally understood as a deep insult, not a physical attack. Jesus does not mean that if someone hits across the right side of our head with a baseball bat, we should allow them to then hit the left side.

iv. It is also wrong to think Jesus means that there is no place for punishment or retribution in society. Jesus here speaks to personal relationships, and not to the proper functions of government in restraining evil (Rom_13:1-4). I must turn my cheek when I am personally insulted, but the government has a responsibility to restrain the evil man from physical assault.

v. Jesus also displayed the principle behind the law in His trials before the Sanhedrin and Pilate. He showed that we are to let God defend our case, not ourselves.

c. **Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two:** Positively, we are told to take command of evil impositions by making a deliberate choice to give more than we are required. At that time, Judea was under Roman military occupation. Under military law, any Roman soldier might command a Jew to carry his soldier's pack for one mile - but only one mile. Jesus here says, "go beyond the one mile required by law and give another mile out of a free choice of love." This is how we transform an attempt to manipulate us into a free act of love.

d. **Give to him who asks of you:** The only limit to this kind of sacrifice is the limit that love itself will impose. It

isn't love to give into someone's manipulation without our transforming it into a free act of love.

It isn't always love to give or to not resist.

9. (Mat_5:43-47) Jesus interprets the law of love towards your neighbor.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?"

a. **You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy"** : The Mosaic Law commanded *you shall love your neighbor* (Lev_19:18). But the scribes and Pharisees added an opposite - and evil - misapplication: an equal obligation to **hate your enemy**.

b. **But I say to you, love your enemies**: Instead, Jesus reminds that in the sense God means it, *all people* are our neighbors, even our enemies. To truly fulfill this law, we must **love, bless, do good** and **pray** for our enemies - not only our friends.

i. Jesus freely acknowledges that we *will* have enemies, yet we are to respond to them in love, trusting that God will protect our cause and destroy our enemies in the best way possible, by transforming them into our friends.

c. **That you may be sons of your Father in heaven**: In doing this, we are imitating God, who shows love towards *His* enemies, by sending **rain on the just and on the unjust**.

d. **For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?** What *do* you do more than the sinner? We

should regard it as no matter of virtue if we merely return the love that is given to us.

i. Remember, Jesus is teaching us the character of the citizens of His kingdom. We should expect that character to be different from the character seen in the world.

10. (Mat_5:48) The conclusion to the true interpretation of the law: **be perfect**.

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

a. **Therefore you shall be perfect:** If a man could live the way Jesus has told us to in this chapter, he would truly be **perfect**.

o He would never hate, slander or speak evil of another person.

o He would never lust in his heart or mind, and not covet anything.

o He would never make a false oath, and always be completely truthful.

o He would let God defend his personal rights, and not take it upon himself to defend those rights.

o He would always love his neighbors, and even his enemies.

b. **Just as your Father in heaven is perfect:** If a man could keep just what Jesus said here, he would truly have a righteousness greater than the scribes and the Pharisees (Mat_5:20), the very thing we must have to enter into God’s Kingdom. But there is only one man who has lived like this: Jesus Christ. What about the rest of us? Are we left out of the Kingdom of God?

i. We see that in this section Jesus was not *primarily* seeking to show what God requires of the Christian in his daily life. True, Jesus has revealed God’s ultimate standard, and we must take it to heart. But His *primary* intent was to say, “If you want to be righteous by the law, you must keep the whole law, internal and external - that is, you must be **perfect!**”

c. Jesus has demonstrated that we need a righteousness that is apart from the law (Rom_3:21-22). As Paul put it in Rom_3:21-22 : *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.*

d. What is our current relation to the law, as truly interpreted? We are exposed as guilty sinners who can never make ourselves righteous by our performance of good works - which was exactly the view held by most people in Jesus day - and in our own day.

e. We must remember the fullness of Jesus' teaching on the law: our command is to love God and our neighbor, and the law will accomplish itself (Mat_22:37-40).

i. The fullness of the interpretation of the law will be honored by love: *Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.* (1Ti_1:5)

(Mat 5:2) Then³ he began to teach⁴ them by saying:

(Mat 5:3) "Blessed⁵ are the poor in spirit,⁶ for the kingdom of heaven belongs⁷ to them.

(Mat 5:4) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.⁸

(Mat 5:5) "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

(Mat 5:6) "Blessed are those who hunger⁹ and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

(Mat 5:7) "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

(Mat 5:8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

(Mat 5:9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children¹⁰ of God.

(Mat 5:10) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

(Mat 5:11) "Blessed are you when people¹¹ insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely¹² on account of me.

(Mat 5:12) Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

(Mat 5:13) ***Salt and Light***

"You are the salt¹³ of the earth. But if salt loses its flavor,¹⁴ how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people.

(Mat 5:14) You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden.

(Mat 5:15) People¹⁵ do not light a lamp and put it under a basket¹⁶ but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

(Mat 5:16) In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honor to your Father in heaven.

(Mat 5:17) ***Fulfillment of the Law and Prophets***

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them.¹⁷

(Mat 5:18) I¹⁸ tell you the truth,¹⁹ until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter²⁰ will pass from the law until everything takes place.

(Mat 5:19) So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others²¹ to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness goes beyond that of the experts in the law²² and the Pharisees,²³ you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:21) **Anger and Murder**

"You have heard that it was said to an older generation,²⁴ '**Do not murder**,'²⁵ and 'whoever murders will be subjected to judgment.'

(Mat 5:22) But I say to you that anyone who is angry with a brother²⁶ will be subjected to judgment. And whoever insults²⁷ a brother will be brought before²⁸ the council,²⁹ and whoever says 'Fool'³⁰ will be sent³¹ to fiery hell.³²

(Mat 5:23) So then, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, (Mat 5:24) leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your gift.

(Mat 5:25) Reach agreement³³ quickly with your accuser while on the way to court,³⁴ or he³⁵ may hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the warden, and you will be thrown into prison.

(Mat 5:26) I tell you the truth,³⁶ you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny!³⁷

(Mat 5:27) **Adultery**

"You have heard that it was said, ' **Do not commit adultery**.'³⁸

(Mat 5:28) But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

(Mat 5:29) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away! It is better to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into hell.³⁹

(Mat 5:30) If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is better to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into hell.

(Mat 5:31) **Divorce**

"It was said, ' **Whoever divorces his wife must give her a legal document.**'⁴⁰

(Mat 5:32) But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

(Mat 5:33) **Oaths**

"Again, you have heard that it was said to an older generation,⁴¹ ' **Do not break an oath, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.**'⁴²

(Mat 5:34) But I say to you, do not take oaths at all — not by heaven, because it is the throne of God, (Mat 5:35) not by earth, because it is his footstool, and not by Jerusalem,⁴³ because it is the city of the great King.

(Mat 5:36) Do not take an oath by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black.

(Mat 5:37) Let your word be 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no.' More than this is from the evil one.⁴⁴

(Mat 5:38) **Retaliation**

"You have heard that it was said, ' **An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.**'⁴⁵

(Mat 5:39) But I say to you, do not resist the evildoer.⁴⁶ But whoever strikes you on the⁴⁷ right cheek, turn the other to him as well.

(Mat 5:40) And if someone wants to sue you and to take your tunic,⁴⁸ give him your coat also.

(Mat 5:41) And if anyone forces you to go one mile,⁴⁹ go with him two.

(Mat 5:42) Give to the one who asks you,⁵⁰ and do not reject⁵¹ the one who wants to borrow from you.

(Mat 5:43) **Love for Enemies**

"You have heard that it was said, ' **Love your neighbor**'⁵² and 'hate your enemy.'

(Mat 5:44) But I say to you, love your enemy and⁵³ pray for those who persecute you, (Mat 5:45) so that you may be like⁵⁴ your Father in heaven, since he causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

(Mat 5:46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even the tax collectors⁵⁵ do the same, don't they?

(Mat 5:47) And if you only greet your brothers, what more do you do? Even the Gentiles do the same, don't they?

(Mat 5:48) So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.⁵⁶

(Mat 6:1) ***Pure-hearted Giving***

"Be¹ careful not to display your righteousness merely to be seen by people.² Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven.

(Guzik)

Mat 6:1-34

MATTHEW 6 - THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (CONTINUED)

A. Doing good to please God.

1. (Mat_6:1) Jesus' warning against doing good to be seen by men.

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

a. Jesus has just clearly shown us God's righteous standard; perhaps He is anticipating the thought "wouldn't everybody be impressed if I was like that?" So now, Jesus address the danger of cultivating an *image* of righteousness.

b. **Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men:** **Charitable deeds** is actually the word *righteousness*. Jesus tells us to not do righteous acts for the sake of display or image (**to be seen by them**).

i. Does this principle of Jesus contradict His previous command to *let your light so shine before men* (Mat_5:16)? Not at all. Although His followers are to be seen doing good works, they must not do good works simply to be seen.

c. **Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven:** The idea is when we do righteous deeds for the attention and applause of men, their attention and applause is our reward. How much better it is to receive a **reward from your Father in heaven**.

2. (Mat_6:2-4) Jesus gives examples of the wrong kind of giving and the right kind of giving.

“Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.”

a. **When you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet:** It was customary in Jesus’ day to draw attention to giving, so the person would be known as generous. Today, people do not **sound a trumpet** to project the image of generosity, but they still know how to call attention to their giving.

b. **Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward:** Jesus tells the one who gives to hear the applause of men that he should savor the applause, because it will be all they get. The grammar of the ancient Greek here is emphatic. When Jesus says they **have their reward**, the word **have** can be understood as “paid in full.”

c. **Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing:** Instead, our giving is to be - if it were possible - even hidden from ourselves. Though we cannot really be ignorant about our own giving, we can deny any indulgent self-congratulation.

d. **That your charitable deed may be in secret:** If someone finds out that we have given something, have we automatically lost our reward? The issue is really a matter of *motive*. If we give for our own glory, it doesn't matter if no one finds out and we will still have no reward from God. But if we give for God's glory, it doesn't matter who finds out, because your reward will remain.

e. **Our Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly:** Jesus points out the exceeding value of doing good for the glory of God. How much better it is to receive our award from God, who rewards much more generously and much more **openly** than men do.

3. (Mat_6:5-6) Jesus gives examples of the wrong kind of prayer and the right kind of prayer.

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

a. **For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets:** There were two main places where a Jew in Jesus' day might pray hypocritically. They might pray at the synagogue at the time of public prayer, or on the street at the appointed times of prayer (9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.).

b. **That they may be seen by men:** These hypocrites pray not to be heard by God, but to **be seen by men**. This is a common fault in public prayer today, when people pray to impress or teach others instead of genuinely pouring out their hearts before God.

i. This kind of prayer is accurately portrayed by the description of an eloquent prayer in a New England church:

“Reverend Jones presented the most beautiful prayer ever offered before a Boston audience.”

ii. What an insult such prayers are to God! When we mouth words towards God, while really trying to impress others, we use God merely as a tool to impress others.

c. **They have their reward:** Again, those praying to be seen of men **have their reward**, and they should enjoy it in full - because that is all they will receive.

d. **But you, when you pray, go into your room:** Rather, we should meet with God in our **room** (or, “closet”). The idea is of a private place where we can impress no one but God.

i. The specific ancient Greek word “**room**” was used for a storeroom where treasures were kept. There are treasures waiting for you in your prayer closet!

ii. Jesus certainly isn’t prohibiting public prayer, but our prayers should always be to God and not towards man.

5. (Mat_6:7-13) The right way to pray.

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

a. **When you pray, do not use vain repetitions:** The right kind of prayer does not use **vain repetitions**, which is any and all prayer which is all words and no meaning, all lips and no mind or heart.

i. The Jewish rabbis of Jesus’ day said things like: “Whoever is long in prayer is heard” and “Whenever the righteous make their prayer long, their prayer is heard.” One famous

Jewish prayer began like this: “Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, and honored, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One.”

ii. When we try to impress God with our many words, we deny that God is a loving, yet holy Father. Instead, we should follow the counsel of Ecc_5:2 : *God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few.*

b. **Our Father in heaven:** The right kind of prayer comes to God as a **Father in heaven**. It rightly recognizes whom we pray to.

i. When we say “**Father**” we use a privileged title, demonstrating a privileged relationship. It was very unusual for Jews call God “**Father**” because it was considered too intimate.

ii. When we say “**in heaven**” we remember God’s holiness and glory. He is **our Father**, but our Father **in heaven**.

c. **Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven:** The right kind of prayer has a passion for God’s glory and agenda. His **name, kingdom** and **will** have the top priority.

i. Everyone wants to guard their own name and reputation. But we must resist the tendency to protect and promote ourselves first and put God’s **name, kingdom** and **will** first.

d. **Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one:** The right kind of prayer will freely bring its own needs to God. This will include needs for daily provision, forgiveness, and strength in the face of temptation.

i. When Jesus says **bread**, He means real bread, as in the sense of daily provisions. Early theologians allegorized this, because they couldn’t imagine Jesus speaking about an everyday thing like bread in such a majestic prayer like this. Calvin rightly said of such interpretations which fail to see God’s interest in the mundane: “This is exceedingly absurd.” God *does* care about everyday things.

ii. The one who is truly forgiven will show forgiveness to others; Jesus will elaborate more on this idea in Mat_6:14-15.

iii. **Temptation** literally means a *test*, not always a solicitation to do evil. God has promised to keep us from any testing that is greater than what we can handle (1Co_10:13).

e. **For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever:** The right kind of prayer praises God and credits to Him **the kingdom and the power and the glory**.

i. There is some dispute as to if this doxology is in the original manuscript Matthew wrote or was added in later by a scribe. Because the *idea* certainly fits, we should regard it as Jesus truly said it.

6. (Mat_6:14-15) More on the importance of forgiveness.

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

a. **If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:** Forgiveness is required for those who have been forgiven. We are not given the luxury of holding on to our bitterness towards other people.

b. **Neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:** Jesus has much more to say about forgiveness (Mat_9:2-6; Mat_18:21-35, and Luk_17:3-4). Here, the emphasis is on the *imperative* of forgiveness - it is not an option.

7. (Mat_6:16-18) The right way to fast.

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

a. **When you fast, do not be like hypocrites:** The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees wanted to make sure that everybody knew they were fasting, so they would have a **sad countenance** and **disfigure their faces** so their “agony” would be evident to all.

i. **Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward:** When hypocrites receive the admiration of men for these “spiritual” efforts, they receive all the reward they will ever get.

b. **When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting:** In contrast, Jesus’ instructs to take care of ourselves as usual and to make the fast something of a secret before God.

c. **When you fast:** However, notice that Jesus assumes that His followers *would* fast. But with most anything good like fasting, our corrupt natures can corrupt something good into something bad.

i. A modern example of a good thing gone bad is the manner of dressing nice on Sunday.

There is nothing wrong with this in itself, but if it is used to draw attention to one’s self, something good has become something bad.

d. You can do a wonderful thing for the wrong motive and have it count for nothing before God; Christianity is a matter of the heart, not just outward works.

e. The real problem with the hypocrite is self-interest. “Ultimately, our only reason for pleasing men around us is that we may be pleased.” (D. Martin Lloyd-Jones)

B. The place of material things: a warning against covetousness.

1. (Mat_6:19-21) The choice between two treasures.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

a. **Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth:**

The ancient Greek more literally says *do not treasure for yourself treasures on earth*. The idea is that earthly treasure is temporary and fading away (**where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal**), but heavenly treasure is secure.

i. The issue isn't that earthly treasures are intrinsically bad; but they are no ultimate value either. If this is the case, then how can the disciple of Jesus their dedication to continually expanding their earthly treasures?

ii. To **lay up for yourselves treasure on earth** is also to doom yourself to a life of frustration and emptiness. Regarding material things, the secret to happiness is not *more*, it is *contentment*. In a 1992 survey, people were asked how much money they would have to make to have “the American dream.” Those who earn \$25,000 or less a year thought they would need around \$54,000. Those in the \$100,000 annual income bracket said that they could buy the dream for an average of \$192,000 a year. These figures indicate that we typically think we would have to have double our income in order to find the good life. But the Apostle Paul had the right idea in 1Ti_6:6 : *Now godliness with contentment is great gain*.

b. **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven:** In contrast, heavenly treasures are everlasting and incorruptible. **Treasures in heaven** given enjoyment *now*, in the contentment and sense of well-being that comes from being a giver. But their ultimate enjoyment comes on the other side of eternity.

i. It has been wisely observed that a hearse is never followed by a U-Haul trailer. Every thing one might take with them to the world beyond are left behind. Gold is a precious commodity on earth; in heaven God uses it to pave the streets!

ii. Jesus once told a parable that has troubled some. In Luk_16:1-14, He speaks of a dishonest manager, who is about to be called to account. Knowing he will be fired, he begins to settle accounts with his master's debtors at terms favorable to the debtors, so they will treat him kindly when the master fires him. The master ends up complimenting the manager for his shrewd tactics (presumably before he fired him). What was praiseworthy about the manager? First, he knew he would be called to account for his life and he took it seriously.

Secondly, he took advantage of his present position to arrange a comfortable future - and we can use our material resources *right now* for eternal good - even though we can't bring them with us!

iii. Our material treasures will not pass from this life to the next; but the good that has been done for the kingdom of God through the use of our treasures lasts for eternity, and the work God does in us through faithful giving will last for eternity.

c. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also:** Jesus draws the conclusion that you can only have your treasure (and your heart) in one place; we can't lay up treasure on earth and on heaven at the same time.

2. (Mat_6:22-23) The choice between two visions.

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!"

a. **The lamp of the body is the eye:** Simply, the idea is that "light" comes into the body through eye. If our eyes were blind, we would live in a "dark" world.

b. **If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light:** The idea behind having a **good** eye is either being *generous* or being *single minded*. Both principles apply to the disciple's attitude towards material things.

i. Being *generous* brings light to our lives. We are happier and more content when we have God's heart of generosity. But if we are not generous, it is as if **your whole body will be full of darkness**. Our selfish, miserly ways cast darkness over everything that we think or do.

ii. Being *single minded* brings light to our lives, and we are also happier and more content when we focus on the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that all the material things will be added to us (Mat_6:33). But when we are double-minded, it is as if **your whole body will be full of darkness**. We try to live for two masters at the same time, and it puts a dark shadow over everything in our life.

c. **Full of light . . . full of darkness**: In any case, Jesus tells us that either our eye is directed at heavenly things (and therefore **full of light**) or it is directed at earthly things (and therefore **full of darkness**).

i. "An *evil eye* was a phrase in use, among the ancient Jews, to denote an *envious, covetous* man or disposition; a man who repined at his neighbour's prosperity, loved his own money, and would do nothing in the way of charity for God's sake." (Clarke)

d. **How great is that darkness**: Building on the analogy of the eye, Jesus reminds us that if we are blind in our eyes, the whole body is blind. The **darkness** is then **great** in our whole body. In the same way, our attitude towards material treasure will either bring great **light** or great **darkness** to our lives.

i. Often a materialistic, miserly, selfish Christian justifies their sin by saying "It's just one area of my life." But even as the darkness of the eye affects everything in the body, so a wrong attitude towards material things brings darkness to our whole being.

3. (Mat_6:24) The choice between two masters.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

a. **No one can serve two masters:** Having **two masters** is not like working two jobs. Jesus has the master and slave relationship in view, and no slave could serve two masters.

i. Jesus states that serving two masters is a simple impossibility. If you think that you are successfully serving two masters, you are deceived. It can't be done. As ancient Israel struggled with idolatry, they *thought* they could worship the Lord God and Baal. God constantly reminded them that to worship Baal was to forsake the Lord God. To be **loyal to the one** is to **despise the other**.

ii. Col_3:5 says, *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* When we are *covetous*, we are *idolaters*.

b. **You cannot serve God and mammon:** There are different opinions regarding the origin of the term **mammon**. Some think it was the name of a pagan god. Others think the name comes "From the Hebrew *aman*, to *trust, confide*; because men are apt to trust in riches." (Clarke) Whatever its origin, the meaning is clear: **mammon** is materialism, "wealth personified" (Expositor's Bible Commentary).

i. "Mammon, saith one, is a monster, whose head is as subtle as the serpent, whose mouth is wide as hell, eyes sharp as a lizard, scent as quick as the vulture, hands fast as harpies, belly insatiable as a wolf, feet swift to shed blood, as a lioness robbed of her whelps." (Trapp) ii. Certainly, Jesus is talking about the *heart* here. Many people would *say* they love God, but their service of money shows that in fact they do not. How can we tell Who or what we are serving? One way is by remembering this principle: *you will sacrifice for your God*. If you will sacrifice for the sake of money, but will not sacrifice for the sake of Jesus, don't deceive yourself: money is your God.

iii. On a Friday afternoon in 1990, a businessman staggered to the steps of his Los Angeles office. Before he died of the

gunshot wound to his chest, he called out the names of his three children. But he still had his \$10,000 Rolex watch clutched in his hand. He was the victim of a rash of Rolex robberies - and was killed as a sacrifice to his god.

iv. A 1992 story in the Los Angeles Times told about Michelle, a successful writer and editor, who fears the day her husband might discover her secret stash of credit cards, her secret post office box or the other tricks she uses to hide how much money she spends shopping for herself. "I make as much money as my husband . . . If I want a \$500 suit from Ann Taylor, I deserve it and don't want to be hassled about it. So the easiest thing to do is lie," she explains.

Last year, when her husband forced her to destroy one of her credit cards, Michelle went out and got a new one without telling him. "I do live in fear. If he discovers this new VISA, he'll kill me."

v. A school teacher explained more: "Men just don't understand that shopping is our drug of choice," she joked, even while admitting that some months her salary goes exclusively to paying the minimum balance on her credit cards. "Walking through the door of South Coast Plaza is like walking through the gates of heaven. God made car trunks for women to hide shopping bags in."

vi. A young professional named Mary explained: "Shopping is my recreation. It's my way of pampering myself. When you walk into [a mall] and you see all the stores, it's like something takes over and you get caught up in it."

vii. We must remember that we don't have to be rich to serve **mammon** (money); the poor can be just as greedy and covetous as the rich are.

C. The place of material things: anxiety over material things.

1. (Mat_6:25) Therefore: because the Kingdom of God is so vastly superior to earthly pursuits, *it* deserves our attention.

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body,

what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

a. **Do not worry about your life:** We should not get tangled up worrying about the things of this world, because our life is more than those things.

b. **Do not worry:** There is a difference between a godly sense of responsibility and an ungodly, untrusting worry; however, an ungodly, untrusting sense of worry usually masquerades as "responsibility."

i. We *are* to be concerned with the right things; the ultimate issues of life - and we leave the management (and the worry) over material things with our heavenly Father.

c. **Is not life more than food:** The worry Jesus speaks of debases man to the level of an animal, who is merely concerned with physical needs. Your life is **more**, and you have eternal matters to pursue.

2. (Mat_6:26-30) Example and arguments against worry.

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?"

a. **Yet your heavenly Father feeds them:** The birds are provided for by God, and if He takes care of them. How much more will He take care of us?

i. But take careful note: the birds don't *worry*, but they do *work*. Bird don't just open their mouth and expected God to fill it.

b. **Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?** Worry accomplishes nothing; we can **add** nothing

to our lives by worrying. There may be greater sins than worry, but there are none more debilitating and useless.

i. **Can add:** The ancient Greek may mean *adding to life* instead of *adding to height*, but the thought is the same

ii. Instead of adding to our life, we can actually harm ourselves through worry. Stress is one of the great contributors to disease and poor health.

c. **If God so clothes the grass of the field:** God even takes care of the **grass of the field**, so He will certainly take care of you.

3. (Mat_6:31-32) Let the heathen worry about those things! You have a heavenly Father that knows your needs.

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

a. **Therefore do not worry:** We are invited to know a freedom from the worry and anxiety that comes from undue concern about material things. We can reflect the same kind of heart that Matthew Henry showed when he said the following after being robbed:

Lord, I thank You:

That I have never been robbed before.

That although they took my money, they spared my life.

That although they took everything, it wasn't very much.

That it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.

4. (Mat_6:33) Summary: Put God's kingdom first - He will take care of these things!

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

a. **But seek first the kingdom of God:** Let this be the acid test when you are in trouble: Am I seeking the Kingdom of God first?

i. In particular regard to the context Jesus is speaking to, we must ask ourselves this question: “Is physical well-being a worthy object to which I will devote my life?” If you think it

is, then your god is mammon, your life is cursed with worry, and you live life as an animal, concerned mostly with physical needs.

b. **And all these things shall be added to you:** If you do not think that your physical-well being is a worthy object to live your life for, you then may enjoy **all these things**. He promises heavenly treasure, rest in divine provision, and fulfill God's highest purpose for man - fellowship with Him, and being part of His kingdom.

i. Remember: this is the choice that you made when you became a Christian, but you reinforce that decision, or deny that decision, everyday of your life.

5. (Mat_6:34) A conclusion with common sense.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble."

a. **Do not worry about tomorrow . . . Sufficient for the day is its own trouble:** If you *must* worry, worry only for the things of today. Most of our worry is over things that we have absolutely no control over anyway.

(Mat 6:2) Thus whenever you do charitable giving,³ do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in synagogues⁴ and on streets so that people will praise them. I tell you the truth,⁵ they have their reward.

(Mat 6:3) But when you do your giving, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (Mat 6:4) so that your gift may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.⁶

(Mat 6:5) ***Private Prayer***

"Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray while standing in synagogues⁷ and on street corners so that people can see them. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.

(Mat 6:6) But whenever you pray, go into your room,⁸ close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father,

who sees in secret, will reward you.⁹

(Mat 6:7) When¹⁰ you pray, do not babble repetitiously like the Gentiles, because they think that by their many words they will be heard.

(Mat 6:8) Do¹¹ not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

(Mat 6:9) So pray this way:¹²

Our Father¹³ in heaven, may your name be honored,¹⁴

(Mat 6:10) may your kingdom come,¹⁵

may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

(Mat 6:11) Give us today our daily bread,¹⁶

(Mat 6:12) and forgive us our debts, as we ourselves¹⁷ have forgiven our debtors.

(Mat 6:13) And do not lead us into temptation,¹⁸ but deliver us from the evil one.¹⁹

(Mat 6:14) "For if you forgive others²⁰ their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

(Mat 6:15) But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins.

(Mat 6:16) ***Proper Fasting***

"When²¹ you fast, do not look sullen like the hypocrites, for they make their faces unattractive²² so that people will see them fasting. I tell you the truth,²³ they have their reward.

(Mat 6:17) When²⁴ you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

(Mat 6:18) so that it will not be obvious to others when you are fasting, but only to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

(Mat 6:19) ***Lasting Treasure***

"Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth²⁵ and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

(Mat 6:20) But accumulate for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.

(Mat 6:21) For where your²⁶ treasure²⁷ is, there your heart will be also.

(Mat 6:22) "The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is healthy,²⁸ your whole body will be full of light.

(Mat 6:23) But if your eye is diseased,²⁹ your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

(Mat 6:24) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate³⁰ the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise³¹ the other. You cannot serve God and money.³²

(Mat 6:25) ***Do Not Worry***

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry³³ about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than food and more to the body than clothing?

(Mat 6:26) Look at the birds in the sky:³⁴ They do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds³⁵ them. Aren't you more valuable³⁶ than they are?

(Mat 6:27) And which of you by worrying can add even one hour to his life?³⁷

(Mat 6:28) Why do you worry about clothing? Think about how the flowers³⁸ of the field grow; they do not work³⁹ or spin.

(Mat 6:29) Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these!

(Mat 6:30) And if this is how God clothes the wild grass,⁴⁰ which is here today and tomorrow is tossed into the fire to heat the oven,⁴¹

won't he clothe you even more,⁴² you people of little faith?

(Mat 6:31) So then, don't worry saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'

(Mat 6:32) For the unconverted⁴³ pursue these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

(Mat 6:33) But above all pursue his kingdom⁴⁴ and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

(Mat 6:34) So then, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.⁴⁵

(Mat 7:1) ***Do Not Judge***

"Do not judge so that you will not be judged.¹

(Guzik)

Mat 7:1-29

MATTHEW 7 - THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (CONTINUED)

A. Judgment and discernment.

1. (Mat_7:1-2) The summary statement on judging others.

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

a. **Judge not, that you be not judged:** This is the Bible verse that seems to be most popular in our present day. But most the people who quote this verse don't understand what Jesus said. They seem to think Jesus commanded a universal acceptance of any lifestyle or teaching.

i. If we see what Jesus said in Mat_7:15-16, He commands us to know people by the fruit of their life, and *some* sort of assessment is necessary for that.

ii. The Christian is called to unconditionally love. But the Christian is not called to unconditional approval. We really *can* love people who do things that should not be approved of.

b. Instead, Jesus is speaking against being *judgmental*, that is, judging motives and the inner man, which only God can know. We can judge the *fruit* of a man, but we can rarely judge their motives with accuracy.

c. **For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged:** In addition, Jesus does not *prohibit* judgment of others. He only requires that our judgment be completely fair, and that we only judge others by a standard we would also like to be judged by.

i. Most of our judgment in regard to others is wrong, not because we judge according to a standard, but because we are hypocritical in the application of that standard - we ignore the standard in our own life. We judge others by one standard, and ourselves by another standard - being far more generous to ourselves than others.

d. **With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you:** According to the teaching of some rabbis in Jesus' time, God had two measures that He used to judge people. One was a **measure** of *justice* and the other was a **measure** of *mercy*. Which **measure** do you want God to use with you? Then you should use that same **measure** with others.

2. (Mat_7:3-5) An illustration of Jesus' principle regarding judging.

"And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you

say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

a. **Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?**

The figures of a **speck** and a **plank** are real figures used humorously. Jesus shows how we are generally far more tolerant to our own sin than we are to the sin of others.

b. **Look, a plank is in your own eye:** Our hypocrisy in these matters is always more evident to others than to ourselves. We may find a way to ignore the plank in our own eye, but others notice it immediately.

i. A good example of this kind of hypocrisy was David's reaction to Nathan's story about a man who unjustly stole and killed another man's lamb. David quickly condemned the man, but was blind to his greater sin (2 Samuel 12).

c. **First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye:** Jesus doesn't say that it is wrong for us to help our brother with the speck in his eye. It is a good thing to help your brother with his speck, *but not before* dealing with the plank in your own eye.

3. (Mat_7:6) Balancing love with discernment.

"Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

a. **Do not give what is holy to the dogs:** **Dogs** and **swine** in this context are those who are hostile to the gospel. Our love for others must not blind us to their hardened rejection of the gospel.

b. **Nor cast your pearls before swine:** Our **pearls** of the precious gospel may only confuse unbelievers, who are blinded to the truth by the god of this age (2Co_4:4) and may only expose the gospel to their ridicule.

i. Of course, Jesus did not say this to discourage us from sharing the gospel. He says this to call us to discernment, and to encourage us to look for prepared hearts.

B. More instructions for prayer.

1. (Mat_7:7-8) Jesus invites us to keep on asking, seeking and knocking.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

a. **Ask . . . seek . . . knock:** We see a progressive intensity, going from **ask** to **seek** to **knock**. Jesus tells us to have intensity and passion in prayer.

b. **Ask and it will be given to you:** God promises an answer to the one who diligently seeks Him. Many of our dispassionate prayers are not answered for good reason, because it is almost as if we ask God to care about something we care little or nothing about.

i. God values persistence and passion in prayer because they show that we share His heart. It shows that we care about the things He cares about.

2. (Mat_7:9-11) Jesus illustrates the giving nature of God.

“Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

a. **Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?** Jesus makes it clear that God doesn't have to be persuaded or appeased in prayer. He wants to give us not just bread, but even *more* than what we ask for.

i. Thankfully, the times we ask for something as bad as a **serpent** without knowing, like a loving parent God often mercifully spares us the just penalty of our ignorance.

b. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven: It is blasphemous to deny God's answer to the seeking heart. We imply that God is worse than even an evil man is.

C. Conclusion of the sermon: make a choice.

1. (Mat_7:12) A summation of Jesus' ethical teaching regarding our treatment of others: the golden rule.

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

a. Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them: The negative way of stating this command was known long before Jesus. It had long been said, "you should *not* do to your neighbor what you would *not* want him to do to you." But it is a large leap for Jesus to put it in the positive, to say that we should *do unto others* what we want them to *do unto us*.

i. In so doing, Jesus makes the command much broader. It is the difference between *not* breaking traffic laws and *doing* something positive like helping a stranded motorist.

ii. This especially applies to Christian fellowship. If we would experience love and have people reach out to us, we must love and reach out to others.

b. For this is the Law and the Prophets: Jesus shows that this simple principle - the *golden rule* - summarizes all **the Law and the Prophets** say about how we should treat others. If we would simply treat others the way we would want to be treated, we would naturally obey all the law says about our relationships with others.

2. (Mat_7:13-14) Choosing one of two ways and one of two destinations.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

a. **Enter by the narrow gate:** Jesus here commits the awful modern “sin” of “narrow mindedness.” To Jesus, there is no doubt that there is a right road and a wrong road. If Christians are accused of being “narrow minded” they should be following Jesus’ example of telling the hard truth, but telling it in love.

b. **Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life:** The true gate is both *narrow* and *difficult*. If your road has a gate that is easy and well traveled, you do well to watch out.

3. (Mat_7:15-20) False prophets will come disguised; how can we tell them?

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”

a. **Beware of false prophets:** There are many who would try to guide us along the broad path that leads to destruction; how can we guard ourselves against them?

b. **Who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves:** It is in the nature of these **false prophets** to deceive and deny their true character. Often they deceive even themselves, believing themselves to be sheep when in fact they are **ravenous wolves**.

c. **You will know them by their fruits:** We guard ourselves against false prophets by taking heed to their **fruits**. This means paying attention to many aspects of their life and ministry.

i. We should pay attention to the *manner of living* a teacher shows. Do they show righteousness, humility and faithfulness in the way they live?

ii. We should pay attention to the *content* of their teaching. Is it true fruit from God's Word, or is it man-centered, appealing to ears that want to be tickled?

iii. We should pay attention to the *effect* of their teaching. Are people growing in Jesus or merely being entertained, and eventually falling away?

d. **Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit:** This **fruit** is the inevitable result of who we *are*. Eventually - though it may take a time for the harvest to come - the good or bad fruit is evident, revealing what sort of "tree" we are.

4. (Mat_7:21-23) Jesus challenges every disciple to take heed to his own salvation.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

a. **Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven:** The people who Jesus speaks of here make a proper verbal confession, calling Jesus **Lord**. This is vital, but never enough by itself.

b. **Who says to Me . . . will say to Me in that day:** It is staggering that Jesus freely claims *He* will be the one people must stand before on that final day of judgment, and *He* is the one who is rightly called **Lord**.

c. The people Jesus speaks of here have impressive spiritual accomplishments. They have **prophesied, cast out demons**, and have **done many wonders**. These are wonderful things, but they mean nothing without true fellowship.

i. Jesus does not seem to doubt their claims of doing the miraculous. He doesn't say, "You didn't really prophesy or cast out demons or do miracles." This leads us to understand

that sometimes miracles are granted through pretended believers, reminding us that in the final analysis, miracles *prove* nothing.

ii. Significantly, they even did these things *in the name of Jesus*. Yet, they never really had a relationship of love and fellowship with Jesus.

d. **I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!** In the end, there is one basis of salvation. It isn't mere verbal confession, not "spiritual works," but knowing Jesus and being known by Him.

i. In addition, these are not people who *lost* their salvation. Instead, they never truly had it (**I never knew you**).

5. (Mat_7:24-27) An *outward* conformity to Jesus' teaching here is not enough; Jesus demands that we be *doers* of the word, not merely *hearers*.

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

a. **I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:** In Jesus' illustration of the two houses, each house looked the same from the outside. The real foundation of our life is usually hidden, and is only proven in the storm.

b. **And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on the house:** A storm (**rain, floods, wind**) was the ultimate in power to generations that didn't have nuclear weapons.

Jesus warns us that the foundations of our lives will be shaken at some time or another, both now (in trials) and in the ultimate judgment before God.

i. It is better that we test our foundation now than at our judgment before God.

c. **Everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them:** Merely *hearing* God's word isn't enough to provide a secure foundation. It is necessary that we are also *doers* of His word. If we are not, we commit the sin that will surely find us out, the sin of doing nothing (Num_32:23) - and **great** will be *our fall*.

6. (Mat_7:28-29) The effect of Jesus' sermon on those who heard Him.

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

a. **For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes:** His audience could not but notice that Jesus taught with an authority lacking in the other teachers in His day, who would often only quote other Rabbis for their "authority." Jesus spoke with inherent authority, and the authority of God's revealed word.

b. **The people were astonished at His teachings:** Whenever God's word is presented as it truly is, with its inherent power, it will astonish people, and set itself apart from the mere opinions of man.

i. When we really understand Jesus in this Sermon on the Mount, we should be **astonished** also. If we aren't, then we probably haven't really heard or understood what Jesus has said.

(Mat 7:2) For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive.²

(Mat 7:3) Why³ do you see the speck⁴ in your brother's eye, but fail to see⁵ the beam of wood⁶ in your own?

(Mat 7:4) Or how can you say⁷ to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye,' while there is a beam in your own?

(Mat 7:5) You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck

from your brother's eye.

(Mat 7:6) Do not give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before pigs; otherwise they will trample them under their feet and turn around and tear you to pieces.⁸

(Mat 7:7) ***Ask, Seek, Knock***

"Ask⁹ and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door¹⁰ will be opened for you.

(Mat 7:8) For everyone who asks¹¹ receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

(Mat 7:9) Is¹² there anyone among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

(Mat 7:10) Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?¹³

(Mat 7:11) If you then, although you are evil,¹⁴ know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts¹⁵ to those who ask him!

(Mat 7:12) In¹⁶ everything, treat others as you would want them¹⁷ to treat you,¹⁸ for this fulfills¹⁹ the law and the prophets.

(Mat 7:13) ***The Narrow Gate***

"Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

(Mat 7:14) But the gate is narrow and the way is difficult that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

(Mat 7:15) ***A Tree and Its Fruit***

"Watch out for false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are voracious wolves.²⁰

(Mat 7:16) You will recognize them by their fruit. Grapes are not gathered²¹ from thorns or figs from thistles, are they?²²

(Mat 7:17) In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad²³ tree bears bad fruit.

(Mat 7:18) A good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree to bear good fruit.

(Mat 7:19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(Mat 7:20) So then, you will recognize them by their fruit.

(Mat 7:21) ***Judgment of Pretenders***

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,'²⁴ will enter into the kingdom of heaven — only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

(Mat 7:22) On that day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons and do²⁵

many powerful deeds?'

(Mat 7:23) Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Go away from me, you lawbreakers!'²⁶

(Mat 7:24) ***Hearing and Doing***

"Everyone²⁷ who hears these words of mine and does them is like²⁸ a wise man²⁹ who built his house on rock.

(Mat 7:25) The rain fell, the flood³⁰ came, and the winds beat against that house, but it did not collapse because it had been founded on rock.

(Mat 7:26) Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

(Mat 7:27) The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, and it collapsed; it was utterly destroyed!"³¹

(Mat 7:28) When³² Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed by his teaching, (Mat 7:29) because he taught them like one who had authority,³³ not like their experts in the law.³⁴

(Mat 8:1) ***Cleansing a Leper***

After he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him.

(Guzik)

Mat 8:1-34

MATTHEW 8 - HEALING, TEACHING AND MIRACLES

A. Jesus cleanses a leper.

1. (Mat_8:1-2) The leper makes his request of Jesus.

When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

a. **Behold, a leper came and worshipped Him:** The condition of leprosy is a model of sin and its effects. It is a contagious, debilitating disease that corrupts a man and makes him essentially dead while alive.

i. Lepers were universally scorned by society and religion. They were especially despised by the Rabbis, who saw their state as the particular judgment of God.

ii. In Jesus' time rabbis spoke about how badly they would treat lepers. One boasted that he refused to buy even an egg on a street where he saw a leper, another bragged that he threw rocks at lepers when he saw them.

b. **Lord, if You are willing:** The leper has no doubt whatsoever about the *ability* of Jesus to heal. His only question is if Jesus is **willing** to heal.

c. **Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean:** This leper wants more than healing. He wants *cleansing*, not only from the leprosy, but from all its debilitating effects on his life and soul.

i. In addition, this is the first place in the gospel where Jesus is called **Lord**; a term that was particularly meaningful in light of the fact that the word **Lord** was used to translate the Hebrew word *Yahweh*.

3. (Mat_8:3) Jesus touches the leper and he is cleansed.

Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

a. **He put out His hand and touched him:** This is a bold and compassionate touch from Jesus. It was against the ceremonial law to touch a leper, which made the touch all the more meaningful to the afflicted man. Of course, as soon as Jesus touched him, he was no longer a leper!

i. Jesus often varied the *manner* of healing, and usually He chose a particular manner that would be meaningful to the afflicted individual.

b. **I am willing:** Jesus' assurance that **I am willing** simply answers the man's question, and gives us a starting point for the times we wonder if Jesus is willing to heal. We should assume Jesus is willing to heal, unless He shows us differently.

i. How can we know if Jesus is willing to heal us? By assuming that He is, and by listening to His if He would want to tell us differently. This is how it happened with the Apostle Paul in 2Co_12:7-10.

4. (Mat_8:4) Jesus commands the healed man to give testimony of his healing to the priests only.

And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

a. **See that you tell no one:** Why did Jesus often command people to be somewhat secretive about their healing? His desire was to keep down the crowds until the proper time for His formal revelation to Israel, which was an exact date as prophesied in Daniel 9.

i. In addition, Jesus' miracles (though they did give testimony to His ministry) were not primarily calculated to make Him famous or a celebrity. Jesus healed to meet the needs of specific individuals.

b. **Show yourself to the priest:** Jesus does command the man to give **a testimony** to the priests, and what a testimony this was! The Mosaic Law prescribed specific sacrifices to be conducted upon the healing of a leper, and

the priests had to “blow the dust” off that portion of their law (Leviticus 14).

B. Jesus heals a centurion’s servant.

1. (Mat_8:5-6) Jesus is approached by a Roman centurion.

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”

a. **A centurion came to Him:** The centurion is obviously a Gentile, because a **centurion** was an officer in the Roman Army. Most every Jew under Roman occupation felt a reason to hate this **centurion**, yet he comes to a Jewish teacher, and not for a selfish reason, but on behalf of his **servant**.

i. The centurion had an unusual attitude towards his slave. Under Roman law, a master had the right to kill his slave, and it was expected that he would do so if the slave became ill or injured to the point where he could not work.

b. **Pleading with Him:** This shows that the centurion did not make a casual request. Matthew describes him as *pleading with* Jesus on behalf of his **servant**.

2. (Mat_8:7-9) The centurion’s understanding of Jesus’ spiritual authority.

And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one*, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does *it*. ”

a. **I will come and heal him:** Jesus did not hesitate to go to the centurion’s house, and we half wish the centurion would have allowed Him. Would Jesus have entered a Gentile’s house? It was completely against Jewish custom, but not against God’s law.

b. **But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed:** The centurion fully understands that Jesus’ healing power was not some sort of magic trick that required the

magician's presence. Instead he knew Jesus had true *authority*, and can command things to be done and completed outside His immediate presence.

i. The centurion shows great faith in Jesus' **word**. He understands that Jesus can heal with His word just as easily as with a touch.

ii. **For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me:** The centurion also knew about the military chain of command, and how the orders of one in authority were unquestioningly obeyed - he sees that Jesus has *at least* that much authority.

c. The centurion also shows great sensitivity to Jesus, in that he wants to spare Jesus the awkward challenge of whether or not to enter a Gentile's house - as well as the time and trouble of travel.

i. He didn't know Jesus well enough to know that He would feel awkward in the least; but his *consideration* of Jesus in this situation is impressive.

3. (Mat_8:10-13) Jesus praises the centurion's faith and heals his servant

When Jesus heard *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you."

And his servant was healed that same hour.

a. **When Jesus heard it, He marveled:** The man's understanding of Jesus' spiritual authority made Jesus marvel. His simple confidence in the ability of Jesus' mere word to heal shows a faith that is free of any superstitious reliance on merely external things. This was truly great faith, worthy of praise.

b. **Many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham:** The fact that such faith is present in a Gentile causes Jesus to announce that there will be Gentiles in the **kingdom of heaven**. They will even sit down to dinner with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**! This was an earth-shattering idea to many of the Jewish people of Jesus' day.

c. **But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness:** As well, Jesus reminds his Jewish listeners that just as the Gentile's racial identity is no automatic bar to the kingdom, *their* racial identity is no guarantee of the kingdom.

C. Two more suffering people are healed.

1. (Mat_8:14-15) Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law.

Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

a. **He saw his wife's mother lying sick:** This clearly establishes the fact that Peter was married. The Roman Catholic church teaches that all priests must be celibate and unmarried, but the one they would call the first and greatest pope was certainly married.

b. **And she arose and served them:** Peter's mother-in-law shows a fitting response of those who have been touched by Jesus' power - she immediately begins to serve.

2. (Mat_8:16-17) Jesus, in fulfillment of prophecy, delivers many from sickness and demonic possession.

When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore *our* sicknesses."

a. **They brought to Him many:** Jesus' care for the individual is shown by the implication that Jesus dealt with each person individually, not in some cold, "assembly line" procedure.

b. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah: Matthew rightly sees this as a partial fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 53, which primarily refers to spiritual healing, but also definitely includes physical healing. In this, Matthew shows Jesus as the true Messiah in delivering people from the bondage of sin and the effects of a fallen world.

c. He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses: The provision for our healing (both physically and spiritually) is made by the sufferings (stripes) of Jesus; the physical dimension of our healing is partially realized now, but finally only in resurrection.

3. This section of Matthew shows four different people being healed, each one different from the other.

a. Different people were healed:

- o A Jew with no social or religious privileges.

- o A Gentile member of the army occupying and oppressing Israel.

- o A woman, related to one of Jesus' devoted followers.

- o Unnamed multitudes.

b. Their requests were made in different ways:

- o A direct request from the sufferer, made in his own faith.

- o A request from one man for another, made in faith on behalf of a suffering man.

- o No request made because Jesus came to the sufferer, so there was no evidence of faith from the healed.

- o Sufferers that were brought to Jesus, with different kinds of faith.

c. Jesus used different methods to heal:

- o Jesus used a touch that was forbidden.

- o Jesus used a word spoken from afar.

- o Jesus used a tender touch.

- o Jesus used a variety of unnamed methods.

d. From all this, we understand that physical healing is an area where God especially shows His sovereignty, and He

does things as He pleases, not necessarily as men might expect.

E. Jesus teaches on discipleship.

1. (Mat_8:18-20) Jesus speaks to an over-enthusiastic follower about the need to appreciate the cost in following Jesus.

And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

a. **Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go:** With the miracles associated with the ministry of Jesus, following Him might have seemed more "glamorous" than it really was. Jesus may have received many spontaneous offers like this.

b. **Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head:** Jesus didn't tell the man "No, you can't follow Me." But He told him the truth, without painting a glamorized version of what it like to follow Him. This is exactly the *opposite* of the technique used by many evangelists today, but Jesus wanted the man to know what it would really be like.

2. (Mat_8:21-22) Jesus speaks to a hesitant follower about the surpassing importance of following Jesus.

Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

a. **Lord, let me first go and bury my father:** Actually, this man did not ask for permission to dig a grave for his deceased father. He wanted to remain in his father's house and care for him until the father died. This was obviously an indefinite period, which could drag on and on.

b. **Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead:** Jesus clearly states the principle that family obligations - or

any other obligation - must not be put ahead of following Jesus.

3. Why did Jesus discourage these potential disciples?

a. Unlike most modern evangelists, He was interested more in quality than in quantity. "Nothing has done more harm to Christianity than the practice of filling the ranks of Christ's army with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession, and to talk fluently of experience." (Bishop Ryle)

b. In addition, Jesus was merely being *honest*. This is what it meant to follow Him, and He wanted people to know it at the outset.

F. Jesus shows His power over the wind and the waves.

1. (Mat_8:23-25) A storm arises on the Sea of Galilee.

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us!

We are perishing!"

a. **Suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea:** The Sea of Galilee is well known for its sudden, violent storms. The severity of this storm is evident in the fact that the disciples (many of which were experienced fishermen on this very sea) were terrified.

b. **But He was asleep:** Jesus' true humanity is shown by His sleep on the boat. He became weary, and would sometimes need to catch sleep wherever He could.

2. (Mat_8:26-27) Jesus displays authority over the creation.

But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

a. **Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?** Jesus rebuked their fear and unbelief, not their request or waking Him. We shouldn't think that Jesus was "cranky" from being

awakened. Their problem was *fear*, and fear and unbelief go together. When we trust God as we should, there is little room for fear.

b. **Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea:** Jesus didn't merely quiet the wind and the sea; He **rebuked the winds and the sea**. This, together with the disciple's great fear and what Jesus will encounter at His destination has led some to believe that there is some type of spiritual attack in the storm.

c. **So the men marveled:** The disciples are amazed. Such a powerful display over creation leads them to ask, **Who can this be?** It can only be the Lord, Jehovah, who only has this power and authority: *O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty like You, O Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when waves rise, You still them.* (Psa_89:8-9)

G. Jesus' power over demonic spirits.

1. (Mat_8:28-29) Jesus meets two demon possessed men.

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

a. **There met Him two demon-possessed men:** The other gospel accounts mention only one of these men. This must be because there was one that was far more severe in his state of demonic possession, having many demons.

b. The demons knew who Jesus was (**Jesus, You Son of God**), even if the disciples didn't (*Who can this be?* in Mat_8:27).

c. **Have You come here to torment us before the time?** These demons also knew of both their immediate destiny (to be cast out) and their ultimate destiny (to suffer everlasting **torment**).

2. (Mat_8:30-32) Jesus casts the demons into a herd of swine.

Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

a. **There was a herd of many swine:** The region of Galilee was populated by both Jews and Gentiles, so this may have been a herd of pigs owned by Gentiles. But most commentators believe that since the pigs were unclean for Jews, they should not have been there, even if they were owned by a Gentile man.

b. **When they had come out, they went into the herd of swine:** There is nothing really comparable to this in the Bible, the casting of a demon from a human to an animal. So why did Jesus do this?

i. The fact that the demons immediately drove the swine to destruction helps explain *why* Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs - because He wanted everyone to know what the real intention of these demons was. They wanted to destroy the man just as they destroyed the pigs. Because men are made in the image of God, they could not have their way as easily with the man, but their intention was just the same: to completely destroy him.

ii. "Jesus allowed the demons to enter the swine to indicate beyond question that their real purpose was the total destruction of their host." (Lane, in his commentary on Mark) iii. Wasn't this unfair to the owner of the pigs? "'But the owners of the swine lost their property.' Yes, and learn from this how small value temporal riches are in the estimation of God. He suffers them to be lost, sometimes to disengage us from them through *mercy*; sometimes out of *justice*, to punish us for having *acquired* or *preserved* them

either by *covetousness* or *injustice*." (Clarke) 3. (Mat_8:33-34) The people ask Jesus to leave the region.

Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men*. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* to depart from their region.

a. **They begged Him to depart from their region:** We would think that the people of the region would be happy that these two demon-possessed men had been delivered. Perhaps they were more interested in their pigs than in people.

(Mat 8:2) And a leper¹ approached, and bowed low before him, saying,² "Lord, if³ you are willing, you can make me clean."

(Mat 8:3) He stretched out his hand and touched⁴ him saying, "I am willing. Be clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

(Mat 8:4) Then Jesus said to him, "See that you do not speak to anyone,⁵ but go, show yourself to a priest, and bring the offering⁶ that Moses commanded,⁷ as a testimony to them."⁸

(Mat 8:5) ***Healing the Centurion's Servant***

When he entered Capernaum,⁹ a centurion¹⁰ came to him asking for help:¹¹

(Mat 8:6) "Lord,¹² my servant¹³ is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible anguish."

(Mat 8:7) Jesus¹⁴ said to him, "I will come and heal him."

(Mat 8:8) But the centurion replied,¹⁵ "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Instead, just say the word and my servant will be healed.

(Mat 8:9) For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me.¹⁶ I say to this one, 'Go' and he goes,¹⁷ and to another 'Come' and he comes, and to my slave¹⁸ 'Do this' and he does it."¹⁹

(Mat 8:10) When²⁰ Jesus heard this he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "I tell you the truth,²¹ I have not found such faith in anyone in Israel!

(Mat 8:11) I tell you, many will come from the east and west to share the banquet²² with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob²³ in the kingdom of heaven, (Mat 8:12) but the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."²⁴

(Mat 8:13) Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; just as you believed, it will be done for you." And the servant²⁵ was healed at that hour.

(Mat 8:14) ***Healings at Peter's House***

Now²⁶ when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying down,²⁷ sick with a fever.

(Mat 8:15) He touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then²⁸ she got up and began to serve them.

(Mat 8:16) When it was evening, many demon-possessed people were brought to him. He drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick.²⁹

(Mat 8:17) In this way what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled:³⁰

" ***He took our weaknesses and carried our diseases.***
"³¹

(Mat 8:18) ***Challenging Professed Followers***

Now when Jesus saw a large crowd³² around him, he gave orders to go to the other side of the lake.³³

(Mat 8:19) Then³⁴ an expert in the law³⁵ came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."³⁶

(Mat 8:20) Jesus said to him, "Foxes have dens, and the birds in the sky³⁷ have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."³⁸

(Mat 8:21) Another³⁹ of the⁴⁰ disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

(Mat 8:22) But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."⁴¹

(Mat 8:23) ***Stilling of a Storm***

As he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.⁴²

(Mat 8:24) And a great storm developed on the sea so that the waves began to swamp the boat. But he was asleep.

(Mat 8:25) So they came⁴³ and woke him up saying, "Lord, save us! We are about to die!"

(Mat 8:26) But⁴⁴ he said to them, "Why are you cowardly, you people of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked⁴⁵ the winds and the sea,⁴⁶ and it was dead calm.

(Mat 8:27) And the men⁴⁷ were amazed and said,⁴⁸ "What sort of person is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!"⁴⁹

(Mat 8:28) ***Healing the Gadarene Demoniacs***

When he came to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes,⁵⁰ two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him.

They were extremely violent, so that no one was able to pass by that way.

(Mat 8:29) They⁵¹ cried out, "Son of God, leave us alone!⁵² Have you come here to torment us before the time?"⁵³

(Mat 8:30) A⁵⁴ large herd of pigs was feeding some distance from them.

(Mat 8:31) Then the demons begged him,⁵⁵ "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

(Mat 8:32) And he said,⁵⁶ "Go!" So⁵⁷ they came out and went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake and drowned in the water.

(Mat 8:33) The⁵⁸ herdsmen ran off, went into the town,⁵⁹ and told everything that had happened to the demon-possessed men.

(Mat 8:34) Then⁶⁰ the entire town⁶¹ came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged him to leave

their region.

(Mat 9:1) ***Healing and Forgiving a Paralytic***

After getting into a boat he crossed to the other side and came to his own town.¹

(Guzik)

Mat 9:1-38

MATTHEW 9 - JESUS MINISTERS AND HEALS

A. A paralyzed man is healed and forgiven.

1. Matthew 9 is a chapter (among several in the gospels) containing several miracles of healing. It is essential to put Jesus'

ministry of healing in proper perspective.

a. The Messiah's role as a healer in was clearly prophesied in passages like Isa_35:5-6 : *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.*

Thus, Jesus' miracles were a testimony not only to the fact that He was sent by God, but that He was the anticipated Messiah.

b. However, as noted earlier, Jesus' miracles were not primarily calculated for crowd effect. Instead, they were primarily done to minister to the humble needs of humble people. For the most part, most Jewish people of that time would have preferred much more spectacular signs - like calling down fire from heaven on a Roman Legion.

c. We also note that the presence of so much sickness among Israel betrays their unfaithfulness to the covenant and their current low spiritual state. God gave them the opposite of what He promised under Exo_15:26 : *If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you*

which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.

2. (Mat_9:1-2) A paralytic is brought to Jesus.

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed.

When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

a. **They brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed:**

Other Gospels (in Mark 2 and Luke 5) explain how the man was brought to Jesus. Because of the crowds, his friends lowered him down to Jesus through the roof.

b. **Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you:**

The faith of the paralyzed man's friends *did* something - they brought this man to Jesus. But they only thought of bringing him to Jesus for the healing of his body. They certainly didn't think that Jesus would forgive His **sins**.

i. But Jesus is getting at the man's greater problem. As bad as it was to be paralyzed, it is infinitely worse to be bound and lost in your sin.

ii. We need not infer that the man was paralyzed as the direct result of some sin that needed forgiving. This doesn't seem to be Jesus' point at all here.

3. (Mat_9:3) The reaction of the religious leaders.

And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

a. **This man blasphemes!** The scribes correctly understand that Jesus is claiming to do something that only God can do. But they are incorrect in assuming that Jesus is not God Himself, and that Jesus blasphemes by considering Himself God.

4. (Mat_9:4-5) Jesus reads the evil hearts of the scribes and presents a question.

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?"

a. **But Jesus, knowing their thoughts:** It should have been enough for Jesus to prove that He could know their evil hearts. Yet He will offer a greater proof of His deity.

b. **For which is easier, to say:** Both healing and forgiveness are impossible with man. But only the promise of healing could be proven right then, because though you can't "see" someone's sin being forgiven, but you can see that they are healed.

5. (Mat_9:6-8) Jesus asserts His authority over both sin and disease.

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"; then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw *it*, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

a. **But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins:** Jesus answers His own question before the religious leaders. Since He can make good on His claim to heal the man, it gives credence to His claim to be able to forgive sins.

b. **When the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God:** At the man's healing, the crowd properly gave God the glory for this miracle. Jesus obviously did not draw attention to Himself by the manner in which the healing was done.

B. The call of Matthew the tax collector.

1. (Mat_9:9) Matthew obeys Jesus' call to come follow Him.

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

a. **A man named Matthew sitting at the tax office:** Tax collectors were not only notorious sinners, they were also properly regarded as collaborators with the Romans against their fellow Jews. Nobody liked the man who sat **at the tax office**.

i. The Jewish people rightly considered them *traitors* because they worked for the Roman government, and had the force of Roman soldiers behind them to make people pay taxes.

They were the most visible Jewish collaborators with Rome.

ii. The Jewish people rightly considered them *extortioners* because they could keep whatever they over-collected. A tax collector bid among others for the tax collecting “contract.” For example, many tax collectors might want to have the “tax contract” for a city like Capernaum.

The Romans awarded the contract to the highest bidder. The man collected taxes, paid the Romans what he promised, and kept the remainder. Therefore, there was a lot of incentive for tax collectors to over-charge and cheat any way they could. It was pure profit for them.

iii. “When a Jew entered the customs service he was regarded as an outcast from society: he was disqualified as a judge or a witness in a court session, was excommunicated from the synagogue, and in the eyes of the community his disgrace extended to his family.” (Lane, Commentary on Mark)

b. And He said to him, “Follow Me” : Understanding how almost everyone hated tax collectors, it is remarkable to see how Jesus loves, and calls, Matthew. And it was a well-placed love; Matthew responded to Jesus’ invitation by leaving his tax collecting business and following Jesus - and eventually writing this same gospel account.

i. In one way, this was more than a sacrifice than some of the other disciples made. Peter, James, and John could more easily go back to their fishing business, but it would be hard for Levi to go back to tax collecting.

ii. There is archaeological evidence that fish taken from the Sea of Galilee were taxed. So Jesus took as His disciple the taxman that may have been taking money from Peter, James, and John and the other fishermen among the

disciples. This might have made for some awkward introductions!

2. (Mat_9:10-13) Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what *this* means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

a. **Many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him:** We are fortunate that God calls sinners, not just “saints.” Jesus came to benefit those who understood their inherent need for Him (*those who are sick*, the *poor in spirit*, Mat_5:3), but the proud who see no need for Jesus (**Those who are well**) benefit nothing from Jesus.
i. It isn’t our sin that keeps us from coming to Jesus, but our pride that refuses to acknowledge our need before Him.

b. **Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?** Because Jesus is the friend of sinners. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom_5:8).

C. The new and old covenants and their difference.

1. (Mat_9:14) The disciples of John ask a question: why don’t Jesus’ disciples fast as they and the Pharisees do?

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

a. **Why do we and the Pharisees fast often:** John, in his ministry, displayed an austerity and humble repentance (Mat_3:1-4) which John’s disciples imitated, showing their own proper humility in light of their own sin and the sin of their people.

b. **The Pharisees** also fasted (often twice a week, according to Luk_18:12), but not out of humble repentance.

They often fasted from a desire to impress themselves and others with their spirituality (Mat_6:16-18).

c. Apparently, Jesus' disciples did not fast as either of these two groups did. Why not?

2. (Mat_9:15-17) The principle: things are different now that the Messiah is here.

And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

a. **Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?** It wasn't appropriate for Jesus' disciples to imitate the Pharisees in their hypocritical shows, nor is it appropriate for them to imitate John's disciples in their ministry of humble preparation, because the disciples experienced what was being prepared for.

b. **But the days will come:** There will come a day when fasting is appropriate for Jesus' followers. But now, when Jesus is among them, is not that day.

c. **Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break:** With the parable of **wineskins**, Jesus explains that He has come not to "patch up" the old institutions of Judaism, but to institute a new covenant altogether. The new covenant doesn't just patch up the old; it supersedes it.

d. **But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved:** Jesus' reference to the wineskins is His announcement that the present institutions of Judaism could not, and would not, contain His *new wine*. He would form a new institution, the church, which would bring Jew

and Gentile together into a completely new body (Eph_2:16).

i. Jesus reminds us that what is old and stagnant often cannot be renewed. God will often look for new vessels to contain His new work, until those vessels make themselves unusable.

E. Two people are healed: A little girl and a woman with an issue of blood.

1. (Mat_9:18-19) A ruler among the Jews asks Jesus to heal his daughter.

While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." So Jesus arose and followed him, and so *did* His disciples.

a. **A ruler came and worshipped Him:** Note that this man *worshipped Him*, and Jesus received this worship - which would have been blasphemous if Jesus had not Himself been God.

i. In other instances in the New Testament where such worship is offered to a human (Act_10:25-26) or to an angel (Rev_22:8-9), it is always immediately refused.

b. **My daughter has just died, but come any lay Your hand on her and she will live:** This **ruler** is to be commended for coming to Jesus, but his faith pales in comparison to the centurion of Matthew 8. The **ruler** thinks it is essential that Jesus personally touch the little girl, while the centurion understood Jesus had the authority to heal with a word from a great distance.

2. (Mat_9:20-22) A woman is healed by her faith and her touch of Jesus.

And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has

made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.

a. Luk_8:43-48 gives a much fuller account of this miracle; but Matthew’s account is enough to show the compassion of Jesus and the fact that His power was not “magical.” Here we simply see the power of God responding to the faith of those who seek Him.

b. **If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well:** Because this woman’s condition was embarrassing, and because she was ceremonially unclean and would be condemned for touching Jesus or even being in a pressing crowd, she wanted to do this secretly. She would not openly ask Jesus to be healed, but she thought “**If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.**”

i. Was this woman correct in thinking she could be healed by touching the border of Jesus’

garment? We have no evidence in the Bible that Jesus healed this way before. Isn’t she just being superstitious, and how can God honor that?

ii. Because even though her faith had elements of err and superstition, she believed in the healing power of Jesus, and the border of His garment served as a point of contact for that faith. There are many things that we could find wrong with this woman’s faith. But more than anything, her faith was in *Jesus*, and the object of faith is much more important than the quality of faith.

3. (Mat_9:23-26) Jesus, despite scorn, raises the little girl from the dead.

When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, He said to them, “Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And they ridiculed Him. But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went out into all that land.

a. **The flute players and the noisy crowd:** These were probably paid mourners, who in the custom of the day

offered an ostentatious display of mourning for a price, not out of sincere sorrow. When we notice how quickly they moved from **wailing** to **they ridiculed Him**, it shows their lack of sincerity.

b. **When the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose:** Jesus endured the scorn from the crowd and raised the girl to life. He certainly would not let the criticism or mocking of the crowd keep Him from doing God's will.

c. Why did Jesus do this? He didn't raise every dead child He ever encountered, but Jesus did so here in a simple act of mercy and compassion to the grieving father. In addition, Jesus must have hated death and its cause, and enjoyed the opportunity to hand death a small "defeat" before He would defeat it altogether at the cross and the empty tomb.

F. Three more accounts of healing.

1. (Mat_9:27-31) Jesus heals two blind men.

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See *that* no one knows *it*." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

a. **Son of David, have mercy on us!** Jesus responded to their simple, yet powerful appeal. They asked God for the best thing they could: **mercy**.

b. **Do you believe that I am able to do this?** Again, we see Jesus healing the blind men in response to their faith. Faith does not *guarantee* healing for anyone, yet there are

undoubtedly multitudes who are not healed because they lack faith.

c. **See that no one knows it:** Despite Jesus' warning, they couldn't resist telling others. Though we do not admire their well-intentioned disobedience, we admire their excitement over the work of God. May the work of God be so amazing in our lives that we feel *compelled* to tell others!

2. (Mat_9:32-34) A mute man healed.

As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

a. **A man, mute and demon-possessed:** In the Jewish understanding of demon possession, this man could not be helped. This was because the rabbis thought that you could not cast out a demon until it told you its name, and a demon that made a man mute could never be made to tell you its name. But Jesus had no problem, **the demon was cast out and the mute spoke.**

b. **It was never seen like this in Israel!** For this reason, this miracle was particularly amazing to the multitudes, and showed not only the complete authority of Jesus over the demonic realm, but also the weakness of the rabbis' traditions.

c. **But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."** In attributing this work of Jesus to the power of Satan, we see in this gospel the beginning of Jesus being rejected by the Pharisees and other religious leaders.

3. (Mat_9:35-38) Jesus' compassion on the multitudes.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and

scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

a. As Jesus encountered the depth of human need, **He was moved with compassion for them**. Jesus was not unfeeling or stoic in the face of people and their problems.

b. **They were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd**: Jesus gives us an apt description of man in his lost state - that we are **like sheep having no shepherd**, which means that we are in a lot of trouble until we come under the care of our Shepherd.

c. **The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few**: Jesus saw the greatness of human need as also an opportunity, as a **harvest** that was **plentiful**. But it was also a harvest that needed **laborers**. How much opportunity to meet human need passes because of the lack of willing **laborers**!

d. **Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest**: So, we are to pray to the **Lord of the harvest** that He would **send out laborers**. But we can only really pray this in sincerity if we pray with an ear open to hearing Him tell us, "*You go into the harvest!*"

e. This ends a thematic section dealing with Jesus' credentials as Messiah, as established by His authority over sickness, disease, death, and demons.

i. In this section, we notice the different ways Jesus displayed His power. Jesus healed by no set formula, because He is the Messiah, not some magician.

ii. Now that Matthew has established Jesus' credentials as the Messiah, he will focus more on His conflict with religious leaders, with a continuing emphasis on His teaching.

(Mat 9:2) Just then² some people³ brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher.⁴ When Jesus saw their⁵ faith, he said to the paralytic, "Have courage, son! Your sins are forgiven."⁶

(Mat 9:3) Then⁷ some of the experts in the law⁸ said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming!"⁹

(Mat 9:4) When Jesus saw their reaction he said, "Why do you respond with evil in your hearts?

(Mat 9:5) Which is easier,¹⁰ to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?

(Mat 9:6) But so that you may know¹¹ that the Son of Man¹² has authority on earth to forgive sins" — then he said to the paralytic¹³ — "Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home."¹⁴

(Mat 9:7) And he stood up and went home.¹⁵

(Mat 9:8) When¹⁶ the crowd saw this, they were afraid¹⁷ and honored God who had given such authority to men.¹⁸

(Mat 9:9) ***The Call of Matthew; Eating with Sinners***

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth.¹⁹ "Follow me," he said to him. And he got up and followed him.

(Mat 9:10) As²⁰ Jesus²¹ was having a meal²² in Matthew's²³ house, many tax collectors²⁴ and sinners came and ate with Jesus and his disciples.

(Mat 9:11) When the Pharisees²⁵ saw this they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"²⁶

(Mat 9:12) When²⁷ Jesus heard this he said, "Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do.²⁸

(Mat 9:13) Go and learn what this saying means: ' ***I want mercy and not sacrifice.***'²⁹ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

(Mat 9:14) ***The Superiority of the New***

Then John's³⁰ disciples came to Jesus³¹ and asked, "Why do we and the Pharisees³² fast often,³³ but your disciples don't fast?"

(Mat 9:15) Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests³⁴ cannot mourn while the bridegroom³⁵ is with them, can

they? But the days³⁶ are coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them,³⁷ and then they will fast.

(Mat 9:16) No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, because the patch will pull away from the garment and the tear will be worse.

(Mat 9:17) And no one pours new wine into old wineskins;³⁸ otherwise the skins burst and the wine is spilled out and the skins are destroyed. Instead they put new wine into new wineskins³⁹ and both are preserved."

(Mat 9:18) ***Restoration and Healing***

As he was saying these things, a ruler came, bowed low before him, and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live."

(Mat 9:19) Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him.

(Mat 9:20) But⁴⁰ a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage⁴¹ for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge⁴² of his cloak.⁴³

(Mat 9:21) For she kept saying to herself,⁴⁴ "If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed."⁴⁵

(Mat 9:22) But when Jesus turned and saw her he said, "Have courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well."⁴⁶ And the woman was healed⁴⁷ from that hour.

(Mat 9:23) When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the disorderly crowd, (Mat 9:24) he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep." And they began making fun of him.⁴⁸

(Mat 9:25) But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and gently took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

(Mat 9:26) And the news of this spread throughout that region.⁴⁹

(Mat 9:27) ***Healing the Blind and Mute***

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, shouting,⁵⁰ "Have mercy⁵¹ on us, Son of David!"⁵²

(Mat 9:28) When⁵³ he went into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus⁵⁴ said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

(Mat 9:29) Then he touched their eyes saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith."

(Mat 9:30) And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about this."

(Mat 9:31) But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region.⁵⁵

(Mat 9:32) As⁵⁶ they were going away,⁵⁷ a man who could not talk and was demon-possessed was brought to him.

(Mat 9:33) After the demon was cast out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!"

(Mat 9:34) But the Pharisees⁵⁸ said, "By the ruler⁵⁹ of demons he casts out demons."⁶⁰

(Mat 9:35) ***Workers for the Harvest***

Then Jesus went throughout all the towns⁶¹ and villages, teaching in their synagogues,⁶² preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness.⁶³

(Mat 9:36) When⁶⁴ he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless,⁶⁵ like sheep without a shepherd.

(Mat 9:37) Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

(Mat 9:38) Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest⁶⁶ to send out⁶⁷ workers into his harvest."

(Mat 10:1) ***Sending Out the Twelve Apostles***

Jesus¹ called his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits² so they could cast them out and heal every kind of disease and sickness.³

(Guzik)

Mat 10:1-42

MATTHEW 10 - THE SENDING OF THE TWELVE

A. Twelve disciples chosen and commissioned.

1. (Mat_10:1-4) The twelve disciples are listed.

And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

a. The main feature of this list is its *diversity*. Jesus chose His disciples from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. About all they had in common was the fact that none of them were from privileged or backgrounds of high status.

i. This is in the spirit of 1Co_1:26-29 : *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

b. **He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease:** Jesus did not only *call* the twelve. He also gave them *power* to do what He has called them to do. The same principle holds true today: whom God calls, God equips.

c. These twelve (excepting Judas, of course), have an important place in God's plan of redemption, including some

particular role in the future judgement (Mat_19:28), and in the founding of the church (Eph_2:20). The Bible promises that their work will be remembered through eternity (Rev_21:14).

2. (Mat_10:5-6) Where they are to go: unto Israel only.

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

a. **Do not go into the way of the Gentiles:** This is the pattern of the gospel - it is *for the Jew first and also for the Greek* (Rom_1:16). Later, the gospel would go to both the **Samaritans** and the **Gentiles**, but it had to begin with **the lost sheep of the house of Israel**.

b. **But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel:** God's intention was to reach the whole world, but beginning with **Israel**. There was certainly enough work to do among the **lost sheep of the house of Israel** to keep the twelve busy until God directly commanded them to expand their ministry.

3. (Mat_10:7-8 a) What they are to do: go out preaching and healing.

"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons."

a. **As you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."** In this sense, the disciples will essentially serve as "advance men" for Jesus, representing His work and ministry over a much broader area than Jesus could just by Himself.

b. **Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers:** The disciples both had a message to preach and a power to display.

In this, they are truly followers of their Master.

4. (Mat_10:8-15) How they were to provide for themselves.

"Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for *your*

journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"

a. **Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts:** They should expect *God* to meet their needs, without taking undue concern for their own needs. But they should expect that God would normally meet their needs through the inspired hospitality of others.

b. Those who do receive these disciples can expect to be blessed (**let your peace come upon it**); but those cities who refuse them can expect to be treated as Gentiles cities (**shake off the dust from your feet**), and as such, are in grave danger of judgment.

c. Even though the twelve can expect their needs to be met through the people they minister to, they should never require their needs to be met as "payment." The foundational principle is **freely you have received, freely give.**

B. Jesus prepares the disciples for persecution.

1. (Mat_10:16-18) Persecution will come.

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles."

a. **I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves:** Jesus freely, and honestly, admits His disciples will face

persecution, and because they are to have no armies behind them, He sends them **as sheep in the midst of wolves**.

b. **Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves**: Despite their vulnerable position, Jesus' followers are not to defend themselves with worldly forms of power. They are to remain **harmless as doves**, though **wise as serpents**.

c. **But beware of men, for they will deliver you up**: Jesus also warns them that men will persecute them out of both civic (**councils**) and religious (**synagogues**) motivation.

d. **For My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles**: Because they are being persecuted for Jesus **sake**, they can be a **testimony** to both religious and civic persecutors.

2. (Mat_10:19-20) When Jesus' disciples are brought before rulers, God will defend and speak for them.

"But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."

a. **Do not worry about how or what you should speak**: Jesus' disciples can have a perfect trust in God at that time, knowing that He will speak through them, even if they are unprepared.

b. **For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak**: This isn't a justification of poor preparation in teaching and preaching God's Word, but it is a promise of strength and guidance for the persecuted who have an opportunity to testify of Jesus.

3. (Mat_10:21-23) The extent of persecution: even among families, and from city to city.

"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

a. **Now brother will deliver up brother to death:** Jesus knew that in some cases the gospel would divide family members, and that some of the most bitter persecution would take place among families.

b. **And cause them to be put to death:** Here also, Jesus plainly says that persecution would sometime result in death. Though most Christians have endured persecution in economic or social arenas, through the centuries, literally millions have given their lives for Jesus.

c. **But he who endures to the end will be saved:** A commitment to *endure to the end* is required for those who will weather the storms of persecution. We who have faced little real persecution have little understanding of just how difficult it is to endure under it.

d. **You will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes:** This is one of the hardest to understand statements of Jesus in Matthew. Could Jesus really mean that He would return to this earth before the disciples would make it through all the cities of Israel? If so, this would make Jesus’

plainly wrong. Instead, it is better to see His “coming” in this passage as His *coming in judgment* upon Judea in 70 a.d. which did happen before the gospel came to every city in Israel.

i. This is the fulfillment of *the day of judgment* warned of in Mat_10:15. In many ways, the judgment poured out by God upon Judea through the Roman armies in 70 a.d. was worse than the judgment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

4. (Mat_10:24-25) Why Jesus’ disciples must expect persecution.

“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master

of the house Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household!”

a. **A disciple is not above his teacher:** Simply put, the disciples should not expect to be treated any *better* than Jesus was treated. If they called Jesus Himself Satan (**Beelzebub**), how much worse should the disciples of Jesus expect!

5. (Mat_10:26-31) Even in the midst of persecution, Jesus’ disciples should not fear, but be bold in their proclamation of the gospel.

“Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

a. **Therefore do not fear them:** Jesus’ disciples can have confidence that the truth *will* prevail, so they should go out and preach it with boldness, despite the danger of persecution.

i. If persecution, or the threat of persecution, makes us draw back from speaking and preaching God’s word, in some measure, Satan has won a victory.

b. **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell:** God is the one to fear, not the men who persecute the followers of Jesus. The worst they can do is destroy your body, but shrinking back from God’s call can have eternal consequences.

c. **Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows:** But Jesus’ disciples don’t need to be afraid, because God really does care for them, even down to

the most minute detail. If God cares for the **sparrows**, and numbers the very hairs of our head, then He will also take care for our lives.

6. (Mat_10:32-39) The attitude Jesus' disciples must be equipped with.

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his *own* household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

a. **Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven:** The disciple must confess Jesus *publicly*. If we will not be public about our allegiance to Him, we cannot expect Him to be public about His allegiance to us.

i. Everyone Jesus called, He called publicly. There is really no such thing as a "secret"

Christian; this is a contradiction in terms - an oxymoron.

ii. If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence among your family and friends to convict you of being a follower of Jesus Christ?

b. **He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me:** The disciple must love and follow Jesus supremely. Our devotion to Jesus must come above even our **own household**.

i. We should expect that normally, following Jesus makes us *better* husbands, fathers, wives, mothers, sons, daughters

and so forth. Yet there are times when the presence of Jesus divides rather than unifies.

ii. The greatest danger of idolatry comes not from what is bad, but from what is *good* - like love in family relationships. The greatest danger to the *best* comes from *second best*.

c. **Take his cross and follow after me:** The disciple must follow Jesus even to the place of taking **his cross**. When a person took a cross in Jesus' day, it was for one reason: to die, because the cross didn't negotiate, didn't compromise, didn't deal. There was no looking back when you took up your cross, and your only hope was in *resurrection* life.

i. Your "cross" isn't really your particular trial or trouble. The cross means one thing: *death* - death to self, but resurrection life unto God.

d. **He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it:** The disciple lives in a paradox. He can only find life by losing it, and he can only live by dying. Resurrection life can only come after we have taken up our cross to follow Jesus.

7. (Mat_10:40-42) The reward due to those who, in contrast to the persecutors, receive the disciples of Jesus.

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

a. **He who receives you receives Me:** The good done to Jesus' disciples is as if it were good done to Jesus Himself, because they are His representatives, carrying on His ministry.

b. **He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward:** We can share in the reward of God's servants by supporting them in

their work. Even seemingly insignificant works of kindness (**a cup of cold water**) performed for God's people are meaningful in God's eyes.

i. What could seem more insignificant than giving a person **a cup of cold water**? In a short time, they will be thirsty again. Yet, even such a small gesture will always be remembered and rewarded by God.

(Mat 10:2) Now these are the names of the twelve apostles:⁴ first, Simon⁵ (called Peter), and Andrew his brother; James son of Zebedee and John his brother; (Mat 10:3) Philip and Bartholomew;⁶ Thomas⁷ and Matthew the tax collector;⁸ James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;⁹

(Mat 10:4) Simon the Zealot¹⁰ and Judas Iscariot,¹¹ who betrayed him.¹²

(Mat 10:5) Jesus sent out these twelve, instructing them as follows:¹³ "Do not go to Gentile regions¹⁴ and do not enter any Samaritan town.¹⁵

(Mat 10:6) Go¹⁶ instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

(Mat 10:7) As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near!'

(Mat 10:8) Heal the sick, raise the dead,¹⁷ cleanse lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

(Mat 10:9) Do not take gold, silver, or copper in your belts,

(Mat 10:10) no bag¹⁸ for the journey, or an extra tunic,¹⁹ or sandals or staff,²⁰ for the worker deserves his provisions.

(Mat 10:11) Whenever²¹ you enter a town or village,²² find out who is worthy there²³ and stay with them²⁴ until you leave.

(Mat 10:12) As you enter the house, give it greetings.²⁵

(Mat 10:13) And if the house is worthy, let your peace come on it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.²⁶

(Mat 10:14) And if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your message, shake the dust off²⁷ your feet as you leave that house or that town.

(Mat 10:15) I tell you the truth,²⁸ it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom and Gomorrah²⁹ on the day of judgment than for that town!

(Mat 10:16) ***Persecution of Disciples***

"I³⁰ am sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves,³¹ so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

(Mat 10:17) Beware³² of people, because they will hand you over to councils³³ and flog³⁴ you in their synagogues.³⁵

(Mat 10:18) And you will be brought before governors and kings³⁶ because of me, as a witness to them and the Gentiles.

(Mat 10:19) Whenever³⁷ they hand you over for trial, do not worry about how to speak or what to say,³⁸ for what you should say will be given to you at that time.³⁹

(Mat 10:20) For it is not you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

(Mat 10:21) "Brother⁴⁰ will hand over brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against⁴¹ parents and have them put to death.

(Mat 10:22) And you will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

(Mat 10:23) Whenever⁴² they persecute you in one place,⁴³ flee to another. I tell you the truth,⁴⁴ you will not finish going through all the towns⁴⁵ of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

(Mat 10:24) "A disciple is not greater than his teacher, nor a slave⁴⁶ greater than his master.

(Mat 10:25) It is enough for the disciple to become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house 'Beelzebul,' how much more will they defame the members of his household!

(Mat 10:26) ***Fear God, Not Man***

"Do⁴⁷ not be afraid of them, for nothing is hidden⁴⁸ that will not be revealed,⁴⁹ and nothing is secret that will not be

made known.

(Mat 10:27) What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what is whispered in your ear,⁵⁰ proclaim from the housetops.⁵¹

(Mat 10:28) Do⁵² not be afraid of those who kill the body⁵³ but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.⁵⁴

(Mat 10:29) Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny?⁵⁵ Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.⁵⁶

(Mat 10:30) Even all the hairs on your head are numbered.

(Mat 10:31) So do not be afraid;⁵⁷ you are more valuable than many sparrows.

(Mat 10:32) "Whoever, then, acknowledges⁵⁸ me before people, I will acknowledge⁵⁹ before my Father in heaven.

(Mat 10:33) But whoever denies me before people, I will deny him also before my Father in heaven.

(Mat 10:34) ***Not Peace, but a Sword***

"Do not think that I have come to bring⁶⁰ peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

(Mat 10:35) For I have come to set *a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*, (Mat 10:36) *and a man's enemies will be the members of his household*.⁶¹

(Mat 10:37) "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

(Mat 10:38) And whoever does not take up his cross⁶² and follow me is not worthy of me.

(Mat 10:39) Whoever finds his life⁶³ will lose it,⁶⁴ and whoever loses his life because of me⁶⁵ will find it.

(Mat 10:40) ***Rewards***

"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.⁶⁶

(Mat 10:41) Whoever receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Whoever⁶⁷ receives a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.

(Mat 10:42) And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple, I tell you the truth,⁶⁸ he will never lose his reward."

(Mat 11:1) When¹ Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their towns.

(Guzik)

Mat 11:1-30

MATTHEW 11 - "COME UNTO ME . . ."

A. Jesus and John the Baptist.

1. (Mat_11:1-3) John the Baptist's disciples ask a question on behalf of John to Jesus: are You really the Messiah (**the Coming One**)?

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

a. **Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?** Why did John, who previously recognized Jesus as Messiah (Joh_1:29-36), ask this question? Perhaps he himself had misunderstood the ministry of the Messiah, thinking that if Jesus was really the Messiah, He would perform works connected with a political deliverance of Israel - or at least the deliverance of John, who was in prison.

b. **He sent two of his disciples:** It is more likely that John did not ask this question for his own sake, but for the sake of his disciples - he wanted them to go to Jesus and ask the question for themselves, causing them to focus their attention on Jesus.

i. This is in keeping with John's heart in ministry: that Jesus would increase, and that he would decrease (Joh_3:30).

2. (Mat_11:4-6) Jesus' answer to John the Baptist's disciples: tell John that prophecy regarding the Messiah is being fulfilled.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: *The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

a. **Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:**

Jesus wants to assure both John and his disciples that He is the Messiah. But He also reminds them that His power will be displayed mostly in humble acts of service, meeting individual needs - not in a spectacular display of political deliverance.

b. **Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me:**

Jesus knows that this is offensive to the expectation of the Jewish people, who longed for political deliverance from Roman domination. But there was a blessing for those who were not offended because of the Messiah who came against the expectation of the people.

3. (Mat_11:7-15) Jesus' discourse about John.

As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see?

A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he* of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.'

Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And

from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

a. **A prophet . . . and more than a prophet:** Jesus reminds the people that John is God's chosen herald of the Messiah, not a man-pleaser or a self-pleaser. He was in fact **more than a prophet**, because he alone had the ministry of serving as the Messiah's herald. For that, he is the greatest of prophets and the greatest of men (**among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist**).

b. **He who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he:** Though John was great, he was not born again under the New Covenant. This is because he lived and died before the completion of Jesus' work at the cross and empty tomb. Therefore, he did not enjoy the benefits of the New Covenant (1Co_11:25, 2Co_3:6, Heb_8:6-13).

c. **The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force:** Jesus' reference to **violence** refers to both the intensity of spiritual warfare surrounding the ministry of Jesus and His herald, and also to the intensity required to persevere in following God and "taking" the kingdom into our hearts.

i. The kingdom will never be received *passively*. It is always founded on God's work on our behalf, but God's work will always produce a response in us.

d. **For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John:** Jesus sees an era ending with John; **all the prophets and the law** anticipated John and his ministry as a herald. There is a sense, in which he speaks for every prophet who heralded Jesus' coming.

e. **And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come:** John may also be seen as Elijah, in a partial fulfillment of Mal_4:5. John was not *actually* Elijah, but he

ministers in the same in spirit and power of Elijah, thus fulfilling his “office” (Luk_1:17). Because John was Elijah in this symbolic sense, Jesus added “**if you are willing to receive it.**”

i. Elijah did come in fact during Jesus’ ministry, during the transfiguration (Mat_17:3). But he will come again before the Second Coming of Jesus, likely as one of the two prophets of Rev_11:3-12.

4. (Mat_11:16-19) Jesus rebukes those who refuse to be pleased by either John the Baptist’s or Jesus’ ministry.

“But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”

a. **We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament:** Those who have a heart to criticize, will find something to criticize. Many people wouldn’t be pleased with *either* John or Jesus.

b. **But wisdom is justified by her children:** However, the wise man is shown by his wise actions (**her children**), such as the wisdom to accept *both* Jesus and John for what they were and what were called to be.

B. The condemned and the accepted.

1. (Mat_11:20-24) Jesus rebukes the cities that did not repent in light of both John the Baptist’s ministry and Jesus’ own ministry.

Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth

and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

a. **He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:** Because **most of His mighty works** were done in these cities, they experienced a greater light - which required a greater accountability.

i. Of course, we in the Western world have a tremendous accountability before God. We have had an access to the gospel that no other society has, yet we are in desperate need of repentance.

b. **It will be more tolerable:** When Jesus says that **it will be more tolerable** for certain cities in the day of judgment, He implies that there are in fact different degrees of judgment. Some will be punished more severely in the final judgment than others.

c. **Chorazin . . . Bethsaida . . . Capernaum:** God's judgment was fulfilled against these cities. Each one of them has been desolate for generations upon generations.

2. (Mat_11:25-27) Jesus praises those who do receive His message.

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."

a. **You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes:** If we do respond to Jesus, it is because the Father has **revealed** these things to **babes** like us.

b. **Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him:** As well, the Father can only be known through the Son, as He chooses to reveal the Father to us.

3. (Mat_11:28-30) Jesus' invitation.

"Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

a. **Come unto Me:** Jesus shows His authority when He says **come unto Me**. This invitation is unthinkable in the mouth of anyone else but God, and woe to the men who call people to themselves instead of Jesus!

b. **All you who labor and are heaven laden:** Jesus directs His call to those who are burdened. He calls those who sense they must come to Him to relieve their need, instead of living in self-sufficiency.

c. **Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me:** Jesus makes a wonderful offer, inviting us to **take My yoke upon you and learn from Me**. We must come as disciples to learn, willing to be guided by His yoke - not merely to "receive" something.

d. **For I am gentle and lowly in heart:** Jesus displays His nature when He describes Himself as **gentle and lowly of heart**. It is His servant's heart, displayed throughout His ministry, that qualifies Him to be the one who bears our burdens.

e. **And you will find rest for your souls:** Jesus describes His gift to His followers as **rest for your soul**. This gift is as simple as it is powerful and profound.

f. **My yoke is easy and My burden is light:** Jesus summarizes this wonderful call with this. The yoke is light

and the burden is easy because He bears it with us.

i. When training a new animal (such as an ox) to plow, ancient farmers would often yoke it to an older, stronger, more experienced animal who would bear the burden and guide the young animal through his learning.

ii. If your yoke is *hard* and your burden is *heavy*, then it isn't *His* yoke or burden, and you aren't letting Him bear it with you. Jesus said it plainly: **My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**

(Mat 11:2) ***Jesus and John the Baptist***

Now when John² heard in prison about the deeds Christ³ had done, he sent his disciples to ask a question:⁴

(Mat 11:3) "Are you the one who is to come,⁵ or should we look for another?"

(Mat 11:4) Jesus answered them,⁶ "Go tell John what you hear and see:⁷

(Mat 11:5) The blind see, the⁸ lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them.

(Mat 11:6) Blessed is anyone⁹ who takes no offense at me."

(Mat 11:7) While they were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness¹⁰ to see? A reed shaken by the wind?¹¹

(Mat 11:8) What¹² did you go out to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes?¹³ Look, those who wear fancy clothes are in the homes of kings!¹⁴

(Mat 11:9) What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more¹⁵ than a prophet.

(Mat 11:10) This is the one about whom it is written:

' Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, ¹⁶ who will prepare your way before you. '17

(Mat 11:11) "I tell you the truth,¹⁸ among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist. Yet

the one who is least¹⁹ in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.

(Mat 11:12) From²⁰ the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and forceful people lay hold of it.²¹

(Mat 11:13) For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John appeared.²²

(Mat 11:14) And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah, who is to come.

(Mat 11:15) The one who has ears had better listen!²³

(Mat 11:16) "To²⁴ what should I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces who call out to one another,²⁵

(Mat 11:17) 'We played the flute for you, yet you did not dance;²⁶

we wailed in mourning,²⁷ yet you did not weep.'

(Mat 11:18) For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!'²⁸

(Mat 11:19) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him,²⁹ a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors³⁰

and sinners!'³¹ But wisdom is vindicated³² by her deeds."³³

(Mat 11:20) ***Woes on Unrepentant Cities***

Then Jesus began to criticize openly the cities³⁴ in which he had done many of his miracles, because they did not repent.

(Mat 11:21) "Woe to you, Chorazin!³⁵ Woe to you, Bethsaida! If³⁶ the miracles³⁷ done in you had been done in Tyre³⁸ and Sidon,³⁹

they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

(Mat 11:22) But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you!

(Mat 11:23) And you, Capernaum,⁴⁰ will you be exalted to heaven?⁴¹ No, you will be thrown down to Hades!⁴² For if

the miracles done among you had been done in Sodom, it would have continued to this day.

(Mat 11:24) But I tell you, it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom⁴³ on the day of judgment than for you!"

(Mat 11:25) ***Jesus' Invitation***

At that time Jesus said,⁴⁴ "I praise⁴⁵ you, Father, Lord⁴⁶ of heaven and earth, because⁴⁷ you have hidden these things from the wise⁴⁸ and intelligent, and revealed them to little children.

(Mat 11:26) Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will.⁴⁹

(Mat 11:27) All things have been handed over to me by my Father.⁵⁰ No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son decides⁵¹ to reveal him.

(Mat 11:28) Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

(Mat 11:29) Take my yoke⁵² on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Mat 11:30) For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry."

(Mat 12:1) ***Lord of the Sabbath***

At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on a Sabbath. His¹ disciples were hungry, and they began to pick heads of wheat² and eat them.

(Guzik)

Mat 12:1-50

MATTHEW 12 - THE JEWISH LEADERS REJECT JESUS

A. Sabbath Conflicts.

1. (Mat_12:1-2) The Pharisees condemn Jesus' disciples for "harvesting" grain on the Sabbath.

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck

heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”

a. **When the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”** To the Pharisees, the issue was the keeping of the Sabbath, not stealing.

The law of Israel allowed people travelling through an area to “glean” enough grain for a small meal from fields in the area (Deu_23:25).

b. **What is not lawful to do on the Sabbath:** This was not a violation of the Mosaic law, but of scribal traditions, which had precisely determined that to **pluck the heads of grain** was to “harvest.” To rub them between your hands to separate the chaff was “milling.” To blow away the chaff from your hand was “winnowing.” All of this was forbidden on the Sabbath - even for personal use.

i. At this time, Rabbis filled Judaism with elaborate rituals related to the Sabbath and observance of other laws. Ancient Rabbis taught that on the Sabbath, a man could not carry something in his right hand or in his left hand, across his chest or on his shoulder. But you could carry something with the back of your hand, with your foot, with your elbow, or in your ear, your hair, or in the hem of your shirt, or in your shoe or sandal. Or, on the Sabbath, you were forbidden to tie a knot - except a woman could tie a knot in her girdle. So, if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well, you could not tie a rope to the bucket, but a woman could tie her girdle to the bucket!

2. (Mat_12:3-8) Jesus defends His disciples.

But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the

Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. But if you had known what *this* means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

a. **Have you not read what David did when he was hungry:** The first principle Jesus presents is simple, and illustrated by David's experience with the priests and the showbread - human need is more important than observing ceremonial rituals.

b. **The priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless:** The second principle Jesus presents is also simple. **The priests** themselves break the Sabbath all the time. Perhaps the Pharisees don't understand as much about Sabbath observance as they thought they did.

i. The reference to the passage **I desire mercy and not sacrifice** (Hos_6:6), and the Pharisees' lack of understanding of this principle is also a way Jesus calls into question the confidence the Pharisees have in their traditions of man.

c. The third principle is the most dramatic, based on who Jesus is. He is **greater than the temple; He is Lord even of the Sabbath.**

i. This is a direct claim to Deity. Jesus says that He knows enough to know if His disciples are breaking the Sabbath law, because He is the **Lord even of the Sabbath.**

3. (Mat_12:9-14) A controversy regarding healing on the Sabbath.

Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"; that they might accuse Him. Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the

Sabbath.” Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

a. **A man who had a withered hand:** At best, the religious leaders saw the man with the withered hand as a test case. It is more likely that they saw the man as bait for a Sabbath controversy trap for Jesus. In contrast, Jesus looked at the man through eyes of compassion.

b. **It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath:** Jesus exposes their hypocrisy by showing their greater concern for their own possessions than for a man in need, arguing persuasively that it can’t be wrong to do good on the Sabbath. Then He compassionately heals the man.

c. **Stretch out your hand:** When Jesus commanded the man to **stretch out your hand**, He commanded the man to do something impossible in his current condition. But Jesus never gives a command without giving the ability to fulfill it, and the man put forth the effort and was healed.

d. **Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him:** In response to this display of compassion, power, and wisdom, the Pharisees, in the hardness of their hearts responded not in reverent worship and submission, but in hardened, murderous rejection.

4. (Mat_12:15-21) In spite of the rejection of the religious leaders, the common people still follow Jesus, and His remains God’s chosen servant.

But when Jesus knew *it*, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “Behold!

My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor

cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; and in His name Gentiles will trust.”

a. **But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there:**

For a time, Jesus withdraws Himself somewhat from public ministry as the opposition rises against Him. This was not out of cowardice, but in respect to the Father’s timing for the culmination of His ministry - it cannot be allowed to “peak” too soon.

b. The quotation from Isa_42:1-5 speaks of the gentle character of the Messiah. If a **reed** is bruised, He will not break it. If He sees even the smallest spark in a man, he will not **quench** it, but gently fan it into flame.

c. **In His name Gentiles will trust:** Finally, the quotation from Isaiah 42 also speaks of the ultimate ministry of Jesus to the Gentiles. This was something surprising - and perhaps even offensive - to Matthew’s Jewish readers, but it is obviously Scriptural, according to Isaiah 42.

B. Continuing rejection by the religious leaders.

1. (Mat_12:22-24) Jesus delivers a man possessed by a demon.

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, “This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

a. **He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw:** Again, Jesus displays His complete power and authority over demons, casting out demonic powers the traditions of the day considered impossible.

b. **Could this be the Son of David?** The crowds react with Messianic expectation, but the religious leaders respond by attributing Jesus’ power to the prince of demons (**This**

fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub).

2. (Mat_12:25-29) Jesus answers the accusation that He operates by Satan's power.

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

a. **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation:** Jesus, quite logically, observes that it makes no sense for Satan to cast out Satan. The Pharisees need to explain how *Satan* benefits by the work Jesus has just done.

b. **By whom do your sons cast them out?** As well, Jesus asks how, if He operates by Satan's power in the casting out of demons, do the Jewish exorcists cast out demons?

c. **And then he will plunder his house:** Jesus, by analogy, declares His authority to bind Satan's power.

He is stronger than the **strong man** is. In so doing, He presents a valuable principle in spiritual warfare, remembering that Jesus gives us the permission to use His name and authority, giving us the "strength" we may need in binding the **strong man**.

4. (Mat_12:30-32) Jesus reveals the desperate place of those who could be hardened enough to attribute His workings to Satanic power.

"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who

speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.”

a. **He who is not with Me is against Me:** First, Jesus removes illusions about any “neutral ground” in regard to His ministry; if you aren’t for Him, you are against Him

b. **Blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven:** Jesus solemnly warns the religious leaders against rejecting Him; their rejection of Jesus - in respect to the revelation received of Him - betrays a nearness to *completely* rejecting the Holy Spirit’s ministry testifying to Jesus, hence the warning of committing the “unforgivable sin.”

i. The Holy Spirit’s main ministry is to testify of Jesus (*He will testify of Me*, Joh_15:26).

When that testimony of Jesus is fully and finally rejected, one has truly blasphemed the Holy Spirit, essentially calling Him a liar in respect to His testimony about Jesus. The religious leaders were close to this.

c. How can one know if they have in fact blasphemed the Holy Spirit? The fact that one desires Jesus at all shows that they are not guilty of this sin - yet, but continued rejection of Jesus makes us more hardened against Him, and puts us on the path of a full and final rejection of Him.

5. (Mat_12:33-37) Their words betray the depravity of their hearts.

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

a. The **bad fruit** of their words (when they condemned Jesus) betrayed the “bad root” in their hearts. If they got their hearts right with God, their words about Jesus would get right also.

b. **Brood of vipers!** With these words, Jesus is essentially calling the religious leaders “sons of Satan.”

They are a generation associated with the serpent, not with God.

c. **Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks:** Our words reveal our hearts. If there were **good treasure** in the hearts of these religious leaders, it would show itself in **good things**.

i. How many times has a person said something that perfectly revealed their heart, and then said, “That’s not what I meant!” when it was exactly what they meant!

d. **By your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned:** Is Jesus making too much of mere words? No; it is by our words that we will be saved - or condemned.

i. Paul wrote about the importance of our words: *That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* (Rom_10:9)

C. The scribes and Pharisees request a sign from Jesus.

1. (Mat_12:38-40) Jesus responds to the request from the scribes and Pharisees.

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

a. **Teacher, we want to see a sign from You:** Their desire to see a sign really expresses another way in which they hope to reject Him. If Jesus *did* provide a sign, they

would find some way to speak against it, thus “proving” to themselves that Jesus is who they already think He is - an emissary of Satan (Mat_12:24).

b. **An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign:** Jesus condemned their seeking after a sign, especially when countless signs happen right in front of their faces. Unfortunately, many today want to cater to our own **evil and adulterous generation** and their desire for “a sign.”

c. **The sign of the prophet Jonah:** Jesus assures them of a sign, but the only sign they will get is the sign of a resurrected Jesus. Jonah gave his life to appease the wrath of God coming upon others. But death did not hold him; after three days and nights of imprisonment, he was alive and free. What a glorious picture of Jesus in an unexpected place!

2. (Mat_12:41-42) Jesus announces the condemnation of the religious leaders at the hands of the Ninevites and the Queen of the South.

“The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.”

a. **The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgement with this generation and condemn it:** Simply put, greater light requires greater judgment. These groups responded in repentance to a lesser light - so how will these religious leaders defend their rejection of a greater light?

3. (Mat_12:43-45) The dangerous consequences of their rejection of Jesus.

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes,

he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

a. **When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none:**

Jesus grants us an important insight into the world of demons. Apparently, they (or at least some of them) desire a human host, and look for such among those who have “unfilled houses.”

b. **And the last state of that man is worse than the first:** How important it is that we be filled with Jesus; as He fills us, we cannot be filled with any **unclean spirit**.

4. (Mat_12:46-50) Jesus identifies His true family.

While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

a. **Who is My mother and who are My brothers?** We might have expected that Jesus’ family would have special privileges before Him. It almost surprises us that they do not.

i. **Who is My mother:** Mary, the mother of Jesus, had no special favors with Jesus, then or now. She stands as a wonderful example of someone who was privileged by God and stood by Jesus, but she is not on a higher level of anyone who **does the will of My Father in heaven**.

ii. **Who are My brothers:** Jesus plainly had **brothers**. The Roman Catholic idea of the perpetual virginity of Mary is in

contradiction to the plain meaning of the Bible. But the brothers of Jesus never seemed to be supportive of His ministry before His death and resurrection (Joh_7:5).

b. For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother: These beloved ones who do the will of God stand in contrast to the *evil and adulterous generation* represented by the Pharisees.

(Mat 12:2) But when the Pharisees³ saw this they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is against the law to do on the Sabbath."

(Mat 12:3) He⁴ said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry — (Mat 12:4) how he entered the house of God and they ate⁵ the sacred bread,⁶ which was against the law⁷ for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests?⁸

(Mat 12:5) Or have you not read in the law that the priests in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are not guilty?

(Mat 12:6) I⁹ tell you that something greater than the temple is here.

(Mat 12:7) If¹⁰ you had known what this means: '***I want mercy and not sacrifice,***'¹¹ you would not have condemned the innocent.

(Mat 12:8) For the Son of Man is lord¹² of the Sabbath."

(Mat 12:9) Then¹³ Jesus¹⁴ left that place and entered their synagogue.¹⁵

(Mat 12:10) A¹⁶ man was there who had a withered¹⁷ hand. And they asked Jesus,¹⁸ "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"¹⁹ so that they could accuse him.

(Mat 12:11) He said to them, "Would not any one of you, if he had one sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, take hold of it and lift it out?

(Mat 12:12) How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

(Mat 12:13) Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and it was restored,²⁰ as healthy as the other.

(Mat 12:14) But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, as to how they could assassinate²¹ him.

(Mat 12:15) ***God's Special Servant***

Now when Jesus learned of this, he went away from there. Great²² crowds²³ followed him, and he healed them all.

(Mat 12:16) But he sternly warned them not to make him known.

(Mat 12:17) This fulfilled what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet:²⁴

(Mat 12:18) " ***Here is²⁵ my servant whom I have chosen,***

the one I love, in whom I take great delight. ²⁶

I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

(Mat 12:19) ***He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.***

(Mat 12:20) ***He will not break a bruised reed or extinguish a smoldering wick, until he brings justice to victory.***

(Mat 12:21) ***And in his name the Gentiles²⁷ will hope.***"²⁸

(Mat 12:22) ***Jesus and Beelzebul***

Then they brought to him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. Jesus²⁹ healed him so that he could speak and see.³⁰

(Mat 12:23) All the crowds were amazed and said, "Could this one be the Son of David?"

(Mat 12:24) But when the Pharisees³¹ heard this they said, "He does not cast out demons except by the power of Beelzebul,³² the ruler³³ of demons!"

(Mat 12:25) Now when Jesus³⁴ realized what they were thinking, he said to them,³⁵ "Every kingdom divided

against itself is destroyed,³⁶ and no town or house divided against itself will stand.

(Mat 12:26) So if³⁷ Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

(Mat 12:27) And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons³⁸ cast them³⁹ out? For this reason they will be your judges.

(Mat 12:28) But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God⁴⁰ has already overtaken⁴¹ you.

(Mat 12:29) How⁴² else can someone enter a strong man's⁴³ house and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can thoroughly plunder the house.⁴⁴

(Mat 12:30) Whoever is not with me is against me,⁴⁵ and whoever does not gather with me scatters.⁴⁶

(Mat 12:31) For this reason I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy,⁴⁷ but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

(Mat 12:32) Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven.⁴⁸ But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven,⁴⁹ either in this age or in the age to come.

(Mat 12:33) ***Trees and Their Fruit***

"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad⁵⁰ and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is known by its fruit.

(Mat 12:34) Offspring of vipers! How are you able to say anything good, since you are evil? For the mouth speaks from what fills the heart.

(Mat 12:35) The good person⁵¹ brings good things out of his⁵² good treasury,⁵³ and the evil person brings evil things out of his evil treasury.

(Mat 12:36) I⁵⁴ tell you that on the day of judgment, people will give an account for every worthless word they speak.

(Mat 12:37) For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

(Mat 12:38) ***The Sign of Jonah***

Then some of the experts in the law⁵⁵ along with some Pharisees⁵⁶ answered him,⁵⁷ "Teacher, we want to see a sign⁵⁸ from you."

(Mat 12:39) But he answered them,⁵⁹ "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

(Mat 12:40) For just as Jonah was ***in the belly of the huge fish*** ⁶⁰ ***for three days and three nights***,⁶¹ so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

(Mat 12:41) The people⁶² of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented when Jonah preached to them⁶³ — and now,⁶⁴ something greater than Jonah is here!

(Mat 12:42) The queen of the South⁶⁵ will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon — and now,⁶⁶ something greater than Solomon is here!

(Mat 12:43) ***The Return of the Unclean Spirit***

"When⁶⁷ an unclean spirit⁶⁸ goes out of a person,⁶⁹ it passes through waterless places⁷⁰ looking for rest but⁷¹ does not find it.

(Mat 12:44) Then it says, 'I will return to the home I left.'⁷² When it returns,⁷³ it finds the house⁷⁴ empty, swept clean, and put in order.⁷⁵

(Mat 12:45) Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there, so⁷⁶ the last state of that person is worse than the first. It will be that way for this evil generation as well!"

(Mat 12:46) ***Jesus' True Family***

While Jesus⁷⁷ was still speaking to the crowds,⁷⁸ his mother and brothers⁷⁹ came and⁸⁰ stood outside, asking⁸¹ to speak to him.

(Mat 12:47) ⁸² Someone⁸³ told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting⁸⁴ to speak to you."

(Mat 12:48) To the one who had said this, Jesus⁸⁵ replied,⁸⁶ "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?"

(Mat 12:49) And pointing⁸⁷ toward his disciples he said, "Here⁸⁸ are my mother and my brothers!

(Mat 12:50) For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is⁸⁹ my brother and sister and mother."

(Mat 13:1) ***The Parable of the Sower***

On that day after Jesus went out of the house, he sat by the lake.

(Guzik)

Mat 13:1-58

MATTHEW 13 - THE KINGDOM PARABLES

A. The parable of the sower.

1. (Mat_13:1-3 a) Jesus teaches with parables.

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. Then He spoke many things to them in parables,

a. **He got into a boat and sat:** Jesus often used a boat as His "pulpit" (Mar_2:9). It gave Him a place to speak away from the press of the crowds, provided good acoustics, and probably a nice backdrop.

i. When Jesus taught from **a boat**, surely that was a new thing. We can imagine some critic saying, "You can't do that! Teaching belongs in the synagogue or in some other appropriate place." It would be easy to come up with objections: "The damp air might make people sick"

or “There are a lot of mosquitoes down at the shore” or “Someone might drown.” But Jesus knew that teaching from a boat suited His purposes well enough.

b. Then He spoke many things to them in parables:

The idea behind the word *parable* is “to throw along side of.” It is a story thrown along side the truth intended to teach. Parables have been called “earthly stories with a heavenly meaning.”

2. (Mat_13:3-9) A simple story about a farmer and sowing seeds.

“Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

a. **A sower went to sow:** Jesus speaks according to the agricultural customs of His day. In those days, seed was scattered first, then it was plowed into the ground.

b. **As he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside:** In this parable, the seed falls on four different types of soil.

i. **The wayside** was the path where people walked and nothing could grow because the ground was too hard.

ii. **Stony places** refers to a place where the soil was thin, laying upon a rocky shelf. On this ground the seed springs up quickly because of the warmth of the soil, but the seed is unable to take root because of the rocky shelf.

iii. **Among thorns** describes soil that is fertile - perhaps too fertile, because **thorns** grow there as well as grain.

iv. **Good ground** describes soil that is both fertile and weed-free. A good, productive crop grows in the **good ground**.

c. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear:** This is a not a call for all to listen. Rather, it is a call for those who are spiritually sensitive to take special note. This is especially true in light of the next few verses, in which Jesus explains the purpose of parables.

3. (Mat_13:10-17) Why did Jesus use parables? In this context, to *hide* the truth from those who would not listen to the Holy Spirit.

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’ But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*. ”

a. **Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given:** He used parables so that the hearts of those rejecting would not be hardened further. The same sun that softens the wax hardens the clay; and so the very same gospel message which breaks down honest hearts and leads to repentance, hardens the hearts of the dishonest and confirms them in their path of disobedience.

b. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand:

In this sense, the parables of Jesus were not illustrations making difficult things clear to all who heard. They were a way of “encoding” God’s message so the spiritually sensitive could understand, but the hardened would merely hear a story without heaping up additional condemnation for rejecting God’s Word.

i. Parables are an example of God’s mercy towards the hardened. The parables are given in light of Jesus’ rejection by the Jewish leaders, mercy given to the undeserving.

c. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled: By speaking in parables, Jesus also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, speaking in a way that the hardened would hear but not hear, and see but not see.

d. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear: In light of this, how blessed are those who *do* understand the parables of Jesus. Not only do they gain the benefit of the spiritual truth illustrated, but they also display some measure of responsiveness to the Holy Spirit.

e. Parables generally teach one main point or principle. We can get into trouble by demanding that they be intricate systems of theology, with the smallest detail revealing hidden truths.

4. (Mat_13:18-23) The parable of the soils explained: each soil represents one of four responses to the gospel of Jesus.

“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received

seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

a. **This is he who received seed by the wayside:** The **wayside** represents those who never really hear the gospel with understanding. The gospel must be understood before it can bear fruit. One of Satan’s chief works is to keep men in darkness regarding their understanding of the gospel (2Co_4:3-4).

b. The **stony places** represent those who receive the gospel enthusiastically, but it is short-lived, because they are not willing to endure **tribulation or persecution . . . because of the word.**

c. The soil **among thorns** represents fertile ground for the word - but their “soil” is *too* fertile, because it also grows all sorts of other things that choke out the word of God.

d. The **good ground** represents those who receive the word, and it bears fruit in their “soil” - in differing proportions, though everyone has a generous harvest.

e. We benefit from seeing bits of ourselves in all four soils.

i. Like the **wayside**, sometimes we allow the word no room at all in our lives.

ii. Like the **stony places**, we sometimes have “hot flashes” of enthusiasm in receiving the word that quickly burn out.

iii. Like the soil **among thorns**, the world is constantly threatening to choke out God’s word and our fruitfulness.

iv. Like the **good ground**, the word bears fruit in our lives.

f. Notice that the difference in each category was with the soil itself. The same seed was cast by the same sower. You could not blame the differences in results on the sower or the seed, but only the soil.

B. Parables of corruption in the kingdom community.

1. (Mat_13:24-30) The parable of the wheat and the tares.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

a. **His enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat:** The enemy's purpose in sowing tares was to destroy the wheat. But the wise farmer will not allow the enemy to succeed. Instead, He will sort it out at harvest time.

b. As applied to the kingdom community, this parable teaches us that it is not our job to sort the **tares** from the **wheat**. That is only done **at the time of harvest**. Among God's people, there may be some who are not genuine Christians, but it is God's job to sort out false professors.

2. (Mat_13:31-32) Another illustration of corruption in the kingdom community: the parable of the mustard seed.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

a. **When it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches:** Some regard this as a beautiful picture of the church growing so large that it provides refuge

for all the world. But this **mustard seed** plant has grown into a monstrosity, and it harbors **birds** - who, the in the parables, are emissaries of Satan (Mat_13:4; Mat_13:19).

3. (Mat_13:33) Another illustration of corruption in the kingdom community: the parable of the leaven in the meal. Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

a. **Leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened:** Some have regarded this parable as another beautiful picture of the kingdom of God working its way through the whole world. But **three measures of meal** was the exact amount customarily used in a grain offering to God, and **leaven** (which always is a picture of evil and sin in the Bible) has absolutely no place in a grain offering.

b. The idea of hiding leaven in three measures of meal would have offended any observant Jew. This certainly isn't a picture of the church gradually influencing the whole world for good.

4. (Mat_13:34-35) Jesus' teaching in parables as a fulfillment of prophecy.

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."

a. **I will open My mouth in parables:** Another reason Jesus taught about the kingdom community in parables is because the church itself was part of the **things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world**, and would not be revealed in fullness until later.

b. Later, Paul expresses this same idea about the church in Eph_3:4-11.

5. (Mat_13:36-43) Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

a. **Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field:**

In His explanation, Jesus makes it clear what the different figures in the parable represent. The **field** represents the **world**, the seed represents the word, and the crop is either grain from **the good seeds**, or are **tares** - representing **the sons of the wicked one**.

b. Jesus explains that the kingdom community will have **tares** - false believers - in its midst, and that it isn't the job of the church to weed all of these out. God will do it at the end of the age.

i. These tares appeared identical to the wheat when they were young. It was only as time went on that the difference was clear

c. **The enemy who sowed them is the devil:** Clearly, the enemy plants counterfeits in the kingdom community, and this is why being a "member of the Christian community" isn't enough.

d. As long as God's people are still in this **world** (the **field**), there will be unbelievers among them; but it should not be

because God's people receive unbelievers as if they were believers.

C. More parables about the kingdom.

1. (Mat_13:44) The parable of the hidden treasure.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

a. **The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field:** The field is the world, but the **man** does not represent the believer, because we have nothing to buy this treasure with. Instead, Jesus is the **man** who gave all that He had to buy the field.

b. **And for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field:** What the **treasure** could be so wonderful that Jesus would give all to purchase it? You! Jesus gave everything to redeem the whole world to preserve a treasure in it, and the treasure is His people.

2. (Mat_13:45-46) The parable of the costly pearl.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

a. **The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls:** Again, Jesus is the buyer and we are the pearl that He sees as so valuable that He would happily give all to have it forever. We are as precious to Jesus as a beautiful **pearl of great price**.

3. (Mat_13:47-50) The parable of the dragnet.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

a. **The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet:** Jesus shows that the world will remain divided right up until the end, and the Church will not reform the world, ushering in the kingdom. Instead, there will be both the **wicked** and the **just** until the end of the age.

4. (Mat_13:51-52) The disciples claim to understand Jesus' parables.

Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

a. **They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."** We wonder if the disciples really did understand Jesus here.

However, Jesus did not deny their claim to understand.

b. **Every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom:** Jesus says that every one who really knows God's word both will know the **old** and learn the **new** of the kingdom D. Further rejection: Jesus is rejected at His Nazareth.

1. (Mat_13:53-56) The people of Nazareth are surprised that such a "normal" boy could grow up to do such spectacular things.

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?"

a. **Is this not the carpenter's son?** Because these villagers were so familiar with Jesus as a boy, and so unaccustomed to spectacular things from him, we may conclude that Jesus must have grown up a very normal boy

unlike the fantastic stories told in apocryphal books like *The Infancy of Jesus*.

b. **His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas:** Jesus plainly had many brothers and sisters; the Roman Catholic idea of the perpetual virginity of Mary is in contradiction to the plain meaning of the Bible.

c. **And His sisters:** We know that Jesus had brothers, but now we also learn that He had **sisters**. Mary did not remain a virgin after she gave birth to Jesus.

2. (Mat_13:57-58) A prophet without honor.

So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

a. **A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, and in his own house:** We often have wrong ideas about what it means to be spiritual. We often think that spiritual people will be much more "strange" than "normal." Therefore, those closest to truly "spiritual" people see just how normal they are and sometimes think that they *aren't* spiritual because they *are* normal.

b. **He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief:** It is truly remarkable that Jesus was, in some manner, limited by their unbelief. As long as God chooses to work in concert with human agency, developing our ability to partner with Him, our unbelief will hinder the work of God.

(Mat 13:2) And such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat to sit while¹ the whole crowd stood on the shore.

(Mat 13:3) He² told them many things in parables,³ saying: "Listen!⁴ A sower went out to sow.⁵

(Mat 13:4) And as he sowed, some seeds⁶ fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.

(Mat 13:5) Other⁷ seeds fell on rocky ground⁸ where they did not have much soil. They sprang up quickly because the

soil was not deep.⁹

(Mat 13:6) But when the sun came up, they were scorched, and because they did not have sufficient root, they withered.

(Mat 13:7) Other seeds fell among the thorns,¹⁰ and they grew up and choked them.¹¹

(Mat 13:8) But other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty.

(Mat 13:9) The one who has ears had better listen!"¹²

(Mat 13:10) Then¹³ the disciples came to him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

(Mat 13:11) He replied,¹⁴ "You have been given¹⁵ the opportunity to know¹⁶ the secrets¹⁷ of the kingdom of heaven, but they have not.

(Mat 13:12) For whoever has will be given more, and will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.¹⁸

(Mat 13:13) For this reason I speak to them in parables: Although they see they do not see, and although they hear they do not hear nor do they understand.

(Mat 13:14) And concerning them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

' You will listen carefully ¹⁹ yet will never understand, you will look closely ²⁰ yet will never comprehend.

(Mat 13:15) **For the heart of this people has become dull;**

they are hard of hearing,

and they have shut their eyes,

so that they would not see with their eyes

and hear with their ears

and understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them. '21

(Mat 13:16) "But your eyes are blessed²² because they see, and your ears because they hear.

(Mat 13:17) For I tell you the truth,²³ many prophets and righteous people longed to see²⁴ what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

(Mat 13:18) "So listen to the parable of the sower:

(Mat 13:19) When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one²⁵ comes and snatches what was sown in his heart;²⁶ this is the seed sown along the path.

(Mat 13:20) The²⁷ seed sown on rocky ground²⁸ is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy.

(Mat 13:21) But he has no root in himself and does not endure;²⁹ when³⁰ trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away.

(Mat 13:22) The³¹ seed sown among thorns is the person who hears the word, but worldly cares and the seductiveness of wealth³² choke the word,³³ so it produces nothing.

(Mat 13:23) But as for the seed sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word and understands. He bears fruit, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown."³⁴

(Mat 13:24) ***The Parable of the Weeds***

He presented them with another parable:³⁵ "The kingdom of heaven is like a person who sowed good seed in his field.

(Mat 13:25) But while everyone was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weeds³⁶ among the wheat and went away.

(Mat 13:26) When³⁷ the plants sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared.

(Mat 13:27) So the slaves³⁸ of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?'

(Mat 13:28) He said, 'An enemy has done this.'so³⁹ the slaves replied, 'Do you want us to go and gather them?'

(Mat 13:29) But he said, 'No, since in gathering the weeds you may uproot the wheat with them.

(Mat 13:30) Let both grow together until the harvest. At⁴⁰ harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, but then⁴¹ gather⁴² the wheat into my barn." ' "

(Mat 13:31) ***The Parable of the Mustard Seed***

He gave⁴³ them another parable:⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed⁴⁵ that a man took and sowed in his field.

(Mat 13:32) It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest garden plant and becomes a tree,⁴⁶ so that the wild birds⁴⁷ come and nest in its branches."⁴⁸

(Mat 13:33) ***The Parable of the Yeast***

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with⁴⁹ three measures⁵⁰ of flour until all the dough had risen."⁵¹

(Mat 13:34) ***The Purpose of Parables***

Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds; he did not speak to them without a parable.

(Mat 13:35) This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet:⁵²

" I will open my mouth in parables,

I will announce what has been hidden from the foundation of the world. "53

(Mat 13:36) ***Explanation for the Disciples***

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

(Mat 13:37) He⁵⁴ answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

(Mat 13:38) The field is the world and the good seed are the people⁵⁵ of the kingdom. The weeds are the people⁵⁶ of the evil one, (Mat 13:39) and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.

(Mat 13:40) As⁵⁷ the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

(Mat 13:41) The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes sin as well as all lawbreakers.⁵⁸

(Mat 13:42) They will ***throw them into the fiery furnace***,⁵⁹ where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(Mat 13:43) Then *the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.⁶⁰ The one who has ears had better listen!⁶¹

(Mat 13:44) ***Parables on the Kingdom of Heaven***

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, hidden in a field, that a person found and hid. Then because of joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field.

(Mat 13:45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls.

(Mat 13:46) When he found a pearl of great value, he went out and sold everything he had and bought it.

(Mat 13:47) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea that caught all kinds of fish.

(Mat 13:48) When it was full, they pulled it ashore, sat down, and put the good fish into containers and threw the bad away.

(Mat 13:49) It will be this way at the end of the age. Angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous (Mat 13:50) and *throw them into the fiery furnace*,⁶² where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(Mat 13:51) "Have you understood all these things?" They replied, "Yes."

(Mat 13:52) Then he said to them, "Therefore every expert in the law⁶³ who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and old."

(Mat 13:53) ***Rejection at Nazareth***

Now when⁶⁴ Jesus finished these parables, he moved on from there.

(Mat 13:54) Then⁶⁵ he came to his hometown⁶⁶ and began to teach the people⁶⁷ in their synagogue.⁶⁸ They⁶⁹ were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and miraculous powers?"

(Mat 13:55) Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary?⁷⁰ And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?

(Mat 13:56) And aren't all his sisters here with us? Where did he get all this?"⁷¹

(Mat 13:57) And so they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house."

(Mat 13:58) And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

(Mat 14:1) ***The Death of John the Baptist***

At that time Herod the tetrarch¹ heard reports about Jesus, (Guzik)

Mat 14:1-36

MATTHEW 14 - JESUS DISPLAYS AUTHORITY OVER NATURE

A. Herod and John the Baptist.

1. (Mat_14:1-2) Herod fears that Jesus is John the Baptist raised from the dead.

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

a. **This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead:**

Though this may seem unreasonable in retrospect, Herod's superstitious manner leads him to this fear.

2. (Mat_14:3-12) Herod's cruel treatment of John the Baptist. For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her*. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother. Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

a. **Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Herod imprisoned John for the bold rebuke of his sin, yet would not kill him because he feared the multitude.**

i. Herod is like many people today, especially politicians. They fear the opinion of the multitude before fearing God.

The only check on Herod's behavior is the fear of man.

b. **The daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod:** Herodias' daughter shamelessly danced before Herod and friends, winning favor and a special request.

c. **Having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."** The request of Herodias shows that the mother had this planned out all along. She knew her husband and she knew the situation, and knew she could get what she wanted this way.

d. **And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her:** Because Herod was afraid to cross his wife or lose face before his friends, he did something he knew to be wrong.

i. Herod met with an inglorious end. In order to take his brother's wife Herodias, Herod put away his first wife, a princess from a neighboring kingdom to the east. Her father was

offended, and came against Herod with an army, and defeated him in battle. Then his

brother Agrippa accused him of treason against Rome, and he was banished into the distant Roman province of Gaul, where Herod and Herodias committed suicide.

3. (Mat_14:13) Jesus departs, not wishing to run afoul of Herod.

When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

a. **When Jesus heard it, He departed from there:** Again, this is not from cowardice, but from an understanding of the Father's timing, and prophetic timing.

B. Jesus feeds the 5,000.

1. (Mat_14:14-16) Jesus' compassion for the multitude.

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

a. **He was moved with compassion for them:** Both Jesus and the disciples were aware of the multitudes, and aware of their needs. Yet it is Jesus' **compassion** and His awareness of the power of God that led Him to go about feeding the multitude.

b. **You give them something to eat:** With this, Jesus challenged both the *compassion* and *faith* of the disciples. Yet, He will not ask them to do without guiding them through it.

2. (Mat_14:17-19) Jesus distributes bread to the multitude. And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

a. **Looking up to heaven, He blessed:** Jesus blessed the Father for the food that He *did* have. He may have prayed the familiar Jewish prayer before a meal, "Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth."

b. **He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes:** This miracle displays Jesus' total authority over creation. It is far beyond what could be expected from even a Spirit-filled man.

c. Jesus also shows us that God has resources that we know nothing about. We tend to only have faith when we can "figure out" how God might provide.

3. (Mat_14:20-21) The multitudes are fed.

So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

a. **They all ate and were filled:** Not only was God's provision abundant, but God didn't want the leftovers to go to waste (**and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained**).

b. **Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children:** The number of 5,000 men suggests a total perhaps of 15,000 to 20,000 people, including women and children.

c. The feeding of the 5,000 gives us three principles for God's provision:

- o Thank God for, and wisely use what you have.
- o Trust God's unlimited resources.
- o Don't waste what He gives you.

C. Jesus walks on the water and comforts His disciples.

1. (Mat_14:22-24) Another storm on the Sea of Galilee.

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

a. **He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray:** Jesus was jealous for time spent alone with His Father. In the midst of His great ministry to others, He did not - He could not - neglect this.

b. **The boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary:** The Sea of Galilee is well known for its sudden storms, and during this storm Jesus wasn't in the boat with the disciples.

2. (Mat_14:25-27) Jesus comes to both help and comfort His disciples.

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

a. **Jesus went to them, walking on the sea:** This walk on the water is another miracle that shows Jesus to be more than a man. It displays His authority over all creation.

3. (Mat_14:28-33) Peter's bold move and subsequent lack of faith.

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

a. **Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water:** We have no idea what prompted Peter to ask such a question, but his faith in Jesus is remarkable. He really responded to Jesus' invitation and got out of the boat.

b. **He walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink:** This is a wonderful picture of walking in faith, showing that we must keep our eyes on Jesus and not on the storm to keep afloat.

c. **Beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"** But even when Peter failed, Jesus was there to save him. Peter knew who to call out to at the moment of crisis.

d. **Those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him:** They moved quickly from fearing the storm to worshipping Jesus. This was a logical reaction considering

the power Jesus showed in walking on the water, and the love He showed in taking care of a sinking Peter.

4. (Mat_14:34-36) Multitudes are healed as they touch Jesus. When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.

a. Begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: Even the hem of Jesus'

garment provides an important point of contact for their faith. Like Paul's sweatbands (Act_19:11-12) and Peter's shadow (Act_5:15), Jesus' hem provided a physical object that helped them to believe God for healing at that moment. (Mat 14:2) and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead! And because of this, miraculous powers are at work in him."

(Mat 14:3) For Herod had arrested John, bound him,² and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, (Mat 14:4) because John had repeatedly told³ him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."⁴

(Mat 14:5) Although⁵ Herod⁶ wanted to kill John,⁷ he feared the crowd because they accepted John as a prophet.

(Mat 14:6) But on Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, (Mat 14:7) so much that he promised with an oath⁸ to give her whatever she asked.

(Mat 14:8) Instructed by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter."

(Mat 14:9) Although it grieved the king,⁹ because of his oath and the dinner guests he commanded it to be given.

(Mat 14:10) So¹⁰ he sent and had John beheaded in the prison.

(Mat 14:11) His¹¹ head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

(Mat 14:12) Then John's¹² disciples came and took the body and buried it and went and told Jesus.

(Mat 14:13) ***The Feeding of the Five Thousand***

Now when Jesus heard this he went away from there privately in a boat to an isolated place. But when the crowd heard about it,¹³

they followed him on foot from the towns.¹⁴

(Mat 14:14) As he got out he saw the large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

(Mat 14:15) When evening arrived, his disciples came to him saying, "This is an isolated place¹⁵ and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

(Mat 14:16) But he¹⁶ replied, "They don't need to go. You¹⁷ give them something to eat."

(Mat 14:17) They¹⁸ said to him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

(Mat 14:18) "Bring them here to me," he replied.

(Mat 14:19) Then¹⁹ he instructed the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven he gave thanks and broke the loaves. He gave them to the disciples,²⁰ who in turn gave them to the crowds.²¹

(Mat 14:20) They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, twelve baskets full.

(Mat 14:21) Not counting women and children, there were about five thousand men who ate.

(Mat 14:22) ***Walking on Water***

Immediately Jesus²² made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dispersed the crowds.

(Mat 14:23) And after he sent the crowds away, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.

(Mat 14:24) Meanwhile the boat, already far from land,²³ was taking a beating from the waves because the wind was against it.

(Mat 14:25) As the night was ending,²⁴ Jesus came to them walking on the sea.²⁵

(Mat 14:26) When²⁶ the disciples saw him walking on the water²⁷ they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" and cried out with fear.

(Mat 14:27) But immediately Jesus²⁸ spoke to them:²⁹ "Have courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

(Mat 14:28) Peter³⁰ said to him,³¹ "Lord, if it is you, order me to come to you on the water."

(Mat 14:29) So he said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus.

(Mat 14:30) But when he saw the strong wind he became afraid. And starting to sink, he cried out,³² "Lord, save me!"

(Mat 14:31) Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

(Mat 14:32) When they went up into the boat, the wind ceased.

(Mat 14:33) Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

(Mat 14:34) After they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.³³

(Mat 14:35) When the people³⁴ there recognized him, they sent word into all the surrounding area, and they brought all their sick to him.

(Mat 14:36) They begged him if³⁵ they could only touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

(Mat 15:1) ***Breaking Human Traditions***

Then Pharisees¹ and experts in the law² came from Jerusalem³ to Jesus and said,⁴

(Guzik)

Mat 15:1-39

MATTHEW 15 - JESUS REBUKES THE PHARISEES AND MINISTERS TO GENTILES

A. Jesus denounces religious externalism.

1. (Mat_15:1-2) Leaders from Jerusalem question Jesus.

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

a. **Scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus:** Up to this point, most of Jesus’

ministry has been in the region of Galilee. Galilee was separate from Judea, where Jerusalem was. These **scribes and Pharisees** are an official delegation from Jerusalem, coming to investigate and assess the words and work of this man Jesus.

b. **They do not wash their hands when they eat bread:** The matter in question has nothing to do with good hygiene. The religious officials are offended that the disciples do not observe the rigid, extensive ritual for washing before meals.

c. These ceremonial washings were commanded by tradition, not by Scripture. The religious leaders say as much when they refer to **the tradition of the elders**.

2. (Mat_15:3) Jesus’ answer: man’s tradition against God’s will.

He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”

a. **Why do you also transgress the commandment of God:** When the disciples were accused of sin, Jesus answered right back with another accusation. Why was Jesus so stern in His reply? Because these leaders were far too concerned with these ceremonial trivialities. When they declared people “unclean”

because of their **tradition**, they denied the people access to God.

b. **Because of your tradition:** It's important to see that the religious leaders demanded these ceremonial washings based on **tradition**, not the Scriptures.

3. (Mat_15:4-6) An example of how their traditions dishonored God: the practice of not helping your parents with "devoted" goods.

"For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is a gift to God*"; then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition."

a. **Honor your father and mother:** The clear command of God says that everyone should give **honor** to their **father and mother**. When we are adults, and no longer in our parent's household or under their authority, we no longer have to *obey* our father and mother. But we do have to **honor** them.

b. **Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God:** The Jewish people of Jesus' day had a way to get around the command to **honor your father and mother**. If they declared that all their possessions or savings were **a gift to God**, specially dedicated to Him, they could then say that their resources were unavailable to help his parents.

c. Through this, someone could completely disobey the command to **honor his father or mother**, and do it while being ultra-religious.

4. (Mat_15:7-9) Jesus condemns their hollow tradition as hypocrisy.

"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.'"

a. **Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men:**

The quotation from Isaiah accurately describes the real problem with these religious leaders. They elevated man's tradition to an equal level with God's revealed word.

b. **Honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me:** We can *appear* to draw near to God, all the while having our **heart far from** Him. When we look at the lives of others, we are often seduced by mere appearance and image.

i. God is interested in the internal and the real. We are far more interested in the external and the image. Is your relationship with God just external and image?

5. (Mat_15:10-11) Jesus speaks to the multitude about religious externalism.

When He had called the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, "Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

a. **Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man:**

Jesus states a fundamental principle. Washing with "unclean hands" or any other such thing that we "put into us" is not defiling. Rather, what **comes out** is what defiles, and it reveals that we have unclean (defiled) hearts.

b. This is not to say that there are not defiling things that we can take into ourselves (such as pornography).

But in this specific context, Jesus spoke about ceremonial cleanliness in regard to food, and anticipated when all food was declared kosher (Act_10:15).

6. (Mat_15:12-14) Jesus then warns His disciples that only what is of God and of truth will last and be secure.

Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone.

They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

a. **Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?** It’s a humorous scene. The disciples came to Jesus, “Um, Jesus - did you know that you offended those guys?” Of course He knew that He offended them! He intended to offend them.

b. **Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted:** This applies directly to the religious leaders. Their *commandments of men* will not last, because they are not rooted either in God or truth.

c. **Let them alone:** Jesus did not organize a focused “Anti-Scribe and Pharisee” committee. He knew that their efforts would fail under the weight of its own legalism.

7. (Mat_15:15-20) The condition of your heart is what really defiles you.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.” So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

a. **Explain this parable to us:** In Mat_15:12-14 Jesus didn’t really speak in a **parable**. Yet because the disciples did not understand Him, they asked for an explanation, much like they did with the parables.

b. **Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man:** Jesus amplifies the point first made in Mat_15:11. We are defiled from the inside out rather than from the outside in, and this is particularly true of ceremonial things like foods.

c. **But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man:** Unfortunately, the emphasis of the religious leader's in Jesus' day - and often our own - is purely on these external things, not the internal things that make for true righteousness.

i. Jesus' words provide a well-needed balance in this day when so many Christians emphasize exercise and healthy eating. These things may be great in themselves, but are not a path to a closer standing with God.

B. Jesus answers a Gentile's request.

1. (Mat_15:21-22) Jesus is met with a request from a Gentile woman.

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

a. **To the region of Tyre and Sidon:** Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities, located some 50 miles away.

Jesus went all this way to meet this one Gentile woman's need. What love this shows, and to **a woman of Canaan!**

b. **Have mercy on me . . . My daughter is severely demon-possessed:** This woman comes to intercede for her daughter, and she provides a picture of an intercessor. She makes her *daughter's* needs her *own*.

c. **O Lord, Son of David!** This Gentile woman also understands who Jesus is. Many of Jesus' own countrymen didn't know who Jesus was, but this **woman of Canaan** knew.

2. (Mat_15:23-28) Jesus heals the Gentile woman's daughter. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and

throw *it* to the little dogs.” And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

a. **I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel:** Jesus defined the focus of His mission of to this Gentile woman, and makes it clear that He was *not* sent to Gentiles like her.

b. **Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”** The woman provides another picture of a dedicated intercessor by her persistence.

c. **It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs:** When Jesus called her one of the **little dogs**, He used **little** as a term of endearment. This softened the traditional Jewish slur towards Gentiles, which called them **dogs** in the most derogatory sense.

d. **Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table:** The woman responds with great faith. She admits her low estate, and did not debate the issue when Jesus called her one of the **little dogs**. She asked Jesus to deal with her on her own low level - and so she received from Jesus. No wonder Jesus said, **O woman, great is your faith!**

i. We need to see the power of coming to God as we are, and let Him make His promise true to the weak and unclean.

ii. We read of *nothing else* that Jesus did during this time in Tyre and Sidon. His only divine appointment was to meet the need of this woman of faith and her sick daughter.

C. The feeding of the 4,000.

1. (Mat_15:29-31) Jesus ministers healing to the multitude.

Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down

at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

a. **They laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them:** We read nothing about any faith on the part of those who were healed, except for the fact that they did come to Jesus for help. Perhaps this is one of many occasions when Jesus ministered out of divine initiative, not in response to a faith-filled request (in contrast to the encounter with the Gentile woman in Tyre and Sidon).

b. The end result is the same: **they glorified the God of Israel.**

2. (Mat_15:32-39) The feeding of the 4,000.

Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

a. **I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way:** This miracle follows the same basic pattern as the feeding the 5,000, except that it reveals that the disciples were generally as slow to believe as we are

(where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?).

b. **The disciples gave to the multitude:** Jesus did what He only could do (the creative miracle) but left to the disciples what they could do (the distribution of the meal).

c. **So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left:** At the end of the meal, they gather more, not less. The **seven large baskets** show that God provided out of His abundance.

(Mat 15:2) "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their⁵ hands when they eat."⁶

(Mat 15:3) He answered them,⁷ "And why do you disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?

(Mat 15:4) For God said,⁸ ' **Honor your father and mother**'⁹ and ' **Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.**'¹⁰

(Mat 15:5) But you say, 'If someone tells his father or mother, "Whatever help you would have received from me is given to God,"'¹¹

(Mat 15:6) he does not need to honor his father.'¹² You have nullified the word of God on account of your tradition.

(Mat 15:7) Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said,

(Mat 15:8) ' **This people honors me with their lips, but their heart** ¹³ **is far from me,**

(Mat 15:9) **and they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.** ' ¹⁴

(Mat 15:10) **True Defilement**

Then he called the crowd to him and said,¹⁵ "Listen and understand.

(Mat 15:11) What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what¹⁶ comes out of the mouth that defiles a person."

(Mat 15:12) Then the disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that when the Pharisees¹⁷ heard this saying they were offended?"

(Mat 15:13) And he replied,¹⁸ "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.

(Mat 15:14) Leave them! They are blind guides.¹⁹ If someone who is blind leads another who is blind,²⁰ both will fall into a pit."

(Mat 15:15) But Peter²¹ said to him, "Explain this parable to us."

(Mat 15:16) Jesus²² said, "Even after all this, are you still so foolish?

(Mat 15:17) Don't you understand that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and then passes out into the sewer?²³

(Mat 15:18) But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these things defile a person.

(Mat 15:19) For out of the heart come evil ideas, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

(Mat 15:20) These are the things that defile a person; it is not eating with unwashed hands that defiles a person."²⁴

(Mat 15:21) ***A Canaanite Woman's Faith***

After going out from there, Jesus went to the region of Tyre²⁵ and Sidon.²⁶

(Mat 15:22) A²⁷ Canaanite woman from that area came²⁸ and cried out,²⁹ "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is horribly demon-possessed!"

(Mat 15:23) But he did not answer her a word. Then³⁰ his disciples came and begged him,³¹ "Send her away, because she keeps on crying out after us."

(Mat 15:24) So³² he answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

(Mat 15:25) But she came and bowed down³³ before him and said,³⁴ "Lord, help me!"

(Mat 15:26) "It is not right³⁵ to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs,"³⁶ he said.³⁷

(Mat 15:27) "Yes, Lord," she replied,³⁸ "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

(Mat 15:28) Then³⁹ Jesus answered her, "Woman,⁴⁰ your faith is great! Let what you want be done for you." And her daughter was healed from that hour.

(Mat 15:29) ***Healing Many Others***

When he left there, Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up a mountain, where he sat down.

(Mat 15:30) Then⁴¹ large crowds came to him bringing with them the lame, blind, crippled, mute, and many others. They⁴² laid them at his feet, and he healed them.

(Mat 15:31) As a result, the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they praised the God of Israel.

(Mat 15:32) ***The Feeding of the Four Thousand***

Then Jesus called the⁴³ disciples and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have already been here with me three days and they have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry since they may faint on the way."

(Mat 15:33) The disciples said to him, "Where can we get enough bread in this desolate place to satisfy so great a crowd?"

(Mat 15:34) Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They replied, "Seven — and a few small fish."

(Mat 15:35) After instructing the crowd to sit down on the ground,

(Mat 15:36) he took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks, he broke them and began giving them to the

disciples, who then gave them to the crowds.⁴⁴

(Mat 15:37) They⁴⁵ all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

(Mat 15:38) Not counting children and women,⁴⁶ there were four thousand men who ate.⁴⁷

(Mat 15:39) After sending away the crowd, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.⁴⁸

(Mat 16:1) ***The Demand for a Sign***

Now when the Pharisees¹ and Sadducees² came to test Jesus,³ they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.⁴

(Guzik)

Mat 16:1-28

MATTHEW 16 - REVEALING WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE CAME TO DO

A. Warnings against the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

1. (Mat_16:1-4) The Sadducees and the Pharisees seek a sign from Jesus.

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red*’; and in the morning, ‘*It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.*’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And He left them and departed.

a. **Then the Pharisees and Sadducees:** Their remarkable working in unison shows a real anxiety among them. The Sadducees and Pharisees were long-standing enemies, and the fact that they can come together against Jesus shows that they regard Him as an extremely serious threat.

b. **And testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven:** Jesus *had* done many signs and they remain unconvinced. They looked for **a sign from heaven**

such as calling down fire from heaven, preferably against a Roman legion. They said they were not convinced by the signs “on earth” Jesus had done.

i. Tradition held that a sign done on earth could be a counterfeit from Satan, but signs done **from heaven** (in or from the sky) were assumed to be from God.

c. **Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times:** Jesus condemned their hypocrisy. They felt confident about predicting the weather from the signs they saw around them, but were blind to the signs regarding Jesus’ Messianic credentials right before their eyes.

i. Jesus wasn’t the only one to notice the hypocrisy in His day. The Jews of Jesus’ day had a proverb saying that if all the hypocrites in the world were divided into ten parts, Jerusalem would contain nine of the ten parts.

d. **A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign:** This reminds that signs alone convert no one. We can place far too much confidence in signs as events bring people to faith in Jesus.

i. The problem isn’t that the signs are themselves weak, but that **a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after** them.

e. **No sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah:** However, Jesus promised a sign that *would* have power to bring people to faith - His own resurrection.

2. (Mat_16:5-12) Jesus cautions the disciples against false teaching.

Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “*It is* because we have taken no bread.” But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, “O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five

loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?; *but* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

a. **It is because we have taken no bread:** Why would Jesus, who miraculously fed both 5,000 and 4,000 worry about bread? The disciples didn’t understand Jesus at all here. It is easy to be judgmental of the spiritual insensitivity of the disciples, until we take an honest look at our own.

b. **Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees:** Jesus impressed the importance of being on guard against false teaching. Here as always, **leaven** is a picture of corruption, especially that of an insidious nature.

B. Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah.

1. (Mat_16:13) Jesus asks the disciples to tell Him who others say He is.

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

a. **Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?** Jesus did not ask this out of insecurity or a lack of full awareness of His identity; nor is He conducting a public opinion poll. Jesus asks this because He wants **His disciples** to know who He is.

2. (Mat_16:14-16) A pointed question and a pointed answer. So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

a. **Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets:** The general tendency was to *underestimate* Jesus, to give Him a measure of respect and honor, but to fall far short of honoring Him for who He really is.

b. **Who do you say that I am?** This is the question placed before all who hear of Jesus; and it is we, not He, who are judged by our answer.

i. In fact, we answer this question every day by what we believe and do. If we really believe Jesus is who He says He is, it will affect the way that we live.

c. **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God:** Peter boldly exclaims the truth about Jesus - that He is not only the Messiah (**the Christ**), but that He is also God.

i. The Jews properly thought that to be **the Son of the living God**, in a unique sense, was to make a claim to deity itself.

3. (Mat_16:17-20) Jesus commends Peter for His bold and correct declaration.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

a. **Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven:** Jesus reveals to Peter that he spoke by divine inspiration, even if he didn't even know it at the time.

i. We too often expect God to speak in strange and unnatural ways. Here God spoke through Peter so naturally

that he didn't even realize his **Father who is in heaven** revealed it to him.

b. **I also say to you that you are Peter:** This is not only a recognition of Peter's more Roman name, it is also a promise of God's work in Peter. The name Peter means "Rock." Though it may be hard to believe, Peter *was* a rock, and *would become* a rock, God transforming his naturally extreme character into something solid and reliable.

c. **On this rock I will build My church:** The words **this rock** have been the source of much controversy. It is best to see them as referring to either Jesus Himself (perhaps Jesus gesturing to Himself as He said this), or as referring to Peter's confession of who Jesus is.

i. Peter, by His own testimony, did not see *himself* as the rock on which the church was founded. He says that we are living stones, but Jesus is the cornerstone (1Pe_2:4-7).

ii. **I will build My church:** This is a clear claim of ownership. The church belongs to Jesus.

c. **And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it:** Jesus also offers a promise - the forces of death and darkness can't prevail against or conquer the church. This is a precious promise in the heat of battle, assuring us that victory is sure.

d. **And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven:** The idea is not that Peter will admit people to heaven, but that Peter opened the door of the kingdom to both the Jews (Act_2:38-39) and the Gentiles (Act_10:34-44).

e. **And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven:** The power for binding and loosing is something that the Jewish rabbis of that day used. They **bound** or **loosed** an individual in the application of a particular point of the law. Jesus promises that Peter - and the other apostles - would be able to set the boundaries authoritatively for the New Covenant community. This was

the authority given to the *apostles and prophets* to build a *foundation* (Eph_2:20).

f. **He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ:** Jesus is pleased that His disciples are coming to know who He is in truth, but He still doesn't want His identity spread abroad before the proper time.

4. (Mat_16:21) Jesus begins to reveal the full extent of His mission.

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

a. **He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things . . . and be killed:** This must have come as quite a shock to His disciples. After fully understanding that Jesus was the Messiah, the last thing they expected was the Messiah would **suffer many things and be killed.**

b. **And be raised the third day:** The disciples were probably so shocked that Jesus said He would be killed in Jerusalem, that these words didn't sink in. Later, an angel reminded them of these words (Luk_24:6-8).

5. (Mat_16:22-23) Peter's unwitting opposition of Jesus.

Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

a. **Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!** Peter's intent was love for Jesus, but he was unwittingly used of Satan. You don't have to be demon possessed to be used of Satan and we need to be on guard lest we are unwittingly used.

b. **You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men:** We must always understand that a sincere heart, with man's thinking, can often lead to disaster.

C. Jesus' call to disciples.

1. (Mat_16:24) Jesus has announced that He is going to Jerusalem to die, so He expects His followers to follow in His footsteps by dying to self.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

a. **Let him deny himself:** Human nature wants to indulge self, not **deny** self. Death to self is always terrible, and if we expect it to be a pleasant experience, we will often be discouraged.

b. **And take up his cross:** Death to self is the radical command of the Christian life. To **take up** your cross meant one thing: you were going to a certain death, and your only hope was in resurrection power.

c. Are you God centered or self centered? Jesus presents quite a "grown-up" gospel to us here, one that does not merely pander to our desires, but challenges us in our deepest being.

2. (Mat_16:25-27) The paradox: finding life by losing it.

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."

a. **Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it:** How can we find our life by losing it? Jesus asks us to look beyond immediate gratification, because the immediate loss is worth the ultimate gain, even though the loss is completely repulsive to our flesh.

b. **He will reward each according to his works:** This ultimate gain is given on this day. If we live life blind to this truth, we really will lose our **own soul**.

3. (Mat 16:28) A promise to **see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.**

"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

a. What did Jesus mean by this? The answer is in the following chapter.

(Mat 16:2) He⁵ said, "When evening comes you say, 'It will be fair weather, because the sky is red,'

(Mat 16:3) and in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, because the sky is red and darkening.'⁶ You know how to judge correctly the appearance of the sky,⁷ but you cannot evaluate the signs of the times.

(Mat 16:4) A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Then⁸ he left them and went away.

(Mat 16:5) ***The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees***

When the disciples went to the other side, they forgot to take bread.

(Mat 16:6) "Watch out," Jesus said to them, "beware of the yeast of the Pharisees⁹ and Sadducees."¹⁰

(Mat 16:7) So¹¹ they began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "It is because we brought no bread."

(Mat 16:8) When Jesus learned of this,¹² he said, "You who have such little faith!¹³ Why are you arguing¹⁴ among yourselves about having no bread?

(Mat 16:9) Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up?

(Mat 16:10) Or the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many baskets you took up?

(Mat 16:11) How could you not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

(Mat 16:12) Then they understood that he had not told them to be on guard against the yeast in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

(Mat 16:13) ***Peter's Confession***

When¹⁵ Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi,¹⁶ he asked his disciples,¹⁷ "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

(Mat 16:14) They answered, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah,¹⁸ and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

(Mat 16:15) He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

(Mat 16:16) Simon Peter answered,¹⁹ "You are the Christ,²⁰ the Son of the living God."

(Mat 16:17) And Jesus answered him,²¹ "You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood²² did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven!

(Mat 16:18) And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades²³ will not overpower it.

(Mat 16:19) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven."

(Mat 16:20) Then he instructed his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.²⁴

(Mat 16:21) ***First Prediction of Jesus' Death and Resurrection***

From that time on²⁵ Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem²⁶ and suffer²⁷ many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law,²⁸ and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

(Mat 16:22) So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him:²⁹ "God forbid,³⁰ Lord! This must not happen to you!"

(Mat 16:23) But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but on man's."³¹

(Mat 16:24) Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to become my follower,³² he must deny³³ himself, take up his cross,³⁴ and follow me.

(Mat 16:25) For whoever wants to save his life³⁵ will lose it,³⁶ but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

(Mat 16:26) For what does it benefit a person³⁷ if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life?

(Mat 16:27) For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then *he will reward each person according to what he has done.*³⁸

(Mat 16:28) I tell you the truth,³⁹ there are some standing here who will not⁴⁰ experience⁴¹ death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."⁴²

(Mat 17:1) ***The Transfiguration***

Six days later¹ Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James,² and led them privately up a high mountain.

(Guzik)

Mat 17:1-27

MATTHEW 17 - JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION

A. Jesus is transfigured.

1. (Mat_17:1-2) The transformation of Jesus before His disciples.

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

a. **Jesus took Peter, James, and John:** Jesus did not invite all the disciples, but only these three.

Perhaps Jesus did this to prevent the account of this amazing miracle being told of before the time was right (Mat_17:9). Perhaps He did it because these three needed a closer eye than the others!

b. **He was transfigured before them:** What does it mean to be **transfigured**? The word speaks of a *transformation*, not merely a change in outward appearance. The effect was extremely striking; Jesus became so bright in appearance that He was even difficult to look at (**like the sun**).

i. Essentially, this was not a *new* miracle, but the temporary cessation of an ongoing one. The real miracle was that Jesus, most of the time, could keep from displaying this glory.

ii. This happens as a fulfillment of Mat_16:28. We should remember that chapter and verse divisions were certainly not in the original writings of the apostles, and did not come until the 16th Century.

2. (Mat_17:3) Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus.

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

a. Why **Moses and Elijah**? Because they represent those who are caught up to God (Jud_1:9 and 2Ki_2:11).

i. More specifically, Moses represents those who die and go to glory, and Elijah represents those who are caught up to heaven without death (as in the rapture described in 1Th_4:13-18)

b. Also because they represent the Law (**Moses**) and the Prophets (**Elijah**). The sum of Old Testament revelation comes to meet with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration.

b. **Talking with Him:** What did they talk about? Since Moses and Elijah figure together in prophecy (they may be the witnesses of Rev_11:3-13), they may have talked about the outworking of God's plan, both with the coming passion in Jerusalem, and the eventual Second Coming.

3. (Mat_17:4-5) Peter's equating Jesus with Moses and Elijah is dramatically rebuked by a voice from the cloud of God's glory.

Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

a. **Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah:** Mar_9:6 and Luk_9:33 point out that Peter didn't know what he was saying when he said this. But the effect of his words was to put Jesus on an equal level with Moses and Elijah, building equal shrines for each of them.

b. **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!** The Father, from heaven, rebukes Peter's attempt to put Jesus on an equal footing with Moses and Elijah. Jesus is unique, the **beloved Son** - He deserves our special attention, so **Hear Him!**

c. This clearly puts Jesus above the Law and the Prophets. He is not merely another, or even better law giver or prophet. Jesus is the **only begotten Son**.

4. (Mat_17:6-8) The disciples react with a holy fear.

And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

a. **They fell on their faces and were greatly afraid:** The disciples react in the way most people do when the encounter God in such a close way, or hear His voice from heaven (Exo_20:18-19, Isa_6:5, Rev_1:17).

i. Encountering a holy God is never a light, frivolous thing. The easy manner in which some recount their "meetings"

with God betrays their shallow understanding of who God is.

ii. However, we can compare the reaction of the disciples with how we, if abiding, can appear before Jesus: *And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming* (1Jn_2:28). The work of grace is so amazing, that it gives us this great confidence.

b. **Arise, and do not be afraid:** The disciples are again in awe of Jesus. This helps explain the purpose of the Transfiguration - to reassure the disciples that Jesus was the Messiah, even if He would indeed be crucified.

i. Note the context: Jesus just revealed His humiliation and sufferings to them. It makes sense that they receive another divine testimony to Jesus' status as the Son of God at this time.

ii. This event truly impressed the disciples with Jesus' glory. Peter mentions it later in 1Pe_1:16-18.

5. (Mat_17:9-13) The problem of Elijah coming first.

Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

a. **Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?** The disciples had heard that **Elijah must come**, according to Mal_4:5 : *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

b. **Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things:** Jesus reassures the disciples that Elijah will indeed

come first. But the first coming of Jesus' did not bring the *great and dreadful day of the Lord*.

Instead, the Mal_4:5 coming of Elijah is probably best identified with the appearance of the two witnesses of Rev_11:3-13, and the Second Coming of Jesus.

c. **But I say to you that Elijah has come already:** Yet, there is also a sense in which **Elijah has come already**, in the work of John the Baptist, who ministered in Elijah's *spirit and power* (Luk_1:17).

B. Jesus casts out a difficult demon from a boy.

1. (Mat_17:14-16) A demon too tough for the disciples to handle.

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

a. **Have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic:** This particular boy's epileptic symptoms were demonic in origin (Mat_17:18), though this certainly could not be said about every case of epilepsy then or today.

b. **So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him:** Sometimes Jesus' followers fail, but Jesus never does. The man was wise for going straight to Jesus when His followers failed.

c. There are "ranks" of demonic powers (Eph_6:12), and evidently, some demons are stronger (more stubborn, resistant) than others. Since the disciples had been given the authority to cast out demons before (Mat_10:8), apparently this demon was more difficult than most.

2. (Mat_17:17-21) Jesus easily casts the demon out.

Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately

and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

a. **Because of your unbelief:** Jesus laid the inability of the disciples to cast out the demon at their **unbelief**. To be successful in casting out demons, there must be trust in the Lord God who has total authority over the demons.

b. **If you have faith as a mustard seed:** The faith that we must have is a faith that has more to do with what *kind* of faith it is than with *how much* faith there is. A small amount of faith - as much **as a mustard seed** (a very small seed) - can accomplish great things, if that small amount of faith is placed in a great and mighty God.

i. Little faith can accomplish great things; but great faith can accomplish even greater things.

What matters most is what our faith is in, the *object* of our faith. "The eye cannot see itself.

Did you ever see your own eye? In a mirror you may have done so, but that was only a

reflection of it. And you may, in like manner, see the evidence of your faith, but you cannot look at the faith itself. Faith looks away to itself to the object of faith, even to Christ."

(Spurgeon)

c. **This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting:** We show our faith in and reliance on God through prayer and fasting. It displays an occupation with and dependence on Jesus.

i. Great prayer and fasting also display earnestness before God that brings answer to prayer.

Often, we pray dispassionately, almost asking God to care about things we care nothing about.

ii. We must be willing to go far in breaking demonic dominion. If the devil knows you will give up easily, then it won't be much of a fight. God looks for steadfast warriors who are willing to sacrifice and fight until the battle is won.

D. Jesus and taxes.

1. (Mat_17:22-23) Jesus reminds His disciples about His future sufferings.

Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

a. **The Son of Man is about to be betrayed:** Though they were frequent, these reminders about Jesus' suffering and resurrection were forgotten by the disciples until after His resurrection (Luk_24:6-8).

b. **And the third day He will be raised up:** Jesus rarely told His disciples about His coming death without also telling of His coming resurrection. We know that the disciples didn't really comprehend the glorious triumph of the resurrection, because they were **exceedingly sorrowful**.

2. (Mat_17:24-26) Time to pay the temple tax.

When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the *temple* tax?" He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free."

a. **From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?** Peter gave the quick and natural answer to this question. But then Jesus explained that He is not liable to pay this tax, because the Father doesn't require it of His own Son.

3. (Mat_17:27) Jesus pays the tax anyway, and by miraculous provision.

“Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

a. **Cast in a hook:** Peter was a professional fisherman who used *nets*, not **a hook** and a line. It must have humbled Peter to fish like this manner, and we can imagine that he hoped none of his other fisherman friends saw him trying to catch one fish at a time.

b. **Take that and give it to them for Me and you:** Jesus trusted in the miraculous provision of God. It's not everyday - or any day - that you catch a fish and take a coin out of its mouth. But Jesus used God's provision to pay His taxes - not out of obligation before God, because He is the Son - but out of a desire to not **offend**.

(Mat 17:2) And he was transfigured before them.³ His⁴ face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

(Mat 17:3) Then Moses⁵ and Elijah⁶ also appeared before them, talking with him.

(Mat 17:4) So⁷ Peter said⁸ to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you want, I will make⁹ three shelters¹⁰ — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

(Mat 17:5) While he was still speaking, a¹¹ bright cloud¹² overshadowed¹³ them, and a voice from the cloud said,¹⁴ "This is my one dear Son,¹⁵ in whom I take great delight. Listen to him!"¹⁶

(Mat 17:6) When the disciples heard this, they were overwhelmed with fear and threw themselves down with their faces to the ground.¹⁷

(Mat 17:7) But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Do not be afraid."

(Mat 17:8) When¹⁸ they looked up, all they saw was Jesus alone.

(Mat 17:9) As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them,¹⁹ "Do not tell anyone about the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

(Mat 17:10) The disciples asked him,²⁰ "Why then do the experts in the law²¹ say that Elijah must come first?"

(Mat 17:11) He²² answered, "Elijah does indeed come first and will restore all things.

(Mat 17:12) And I tell you that Elijah has already come. Yet they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. In²³ the same way, the Son of Man will suffer at their hands."

(Mat 17:13) Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

(Mat 17:14) ***The Disciples' Failure to Heal***

When²⁴ they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him,

(Mat 17:15) and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, because he has seizures²⁵ and suffers terribly, for he often falls into the fire and into the water.

(Mat 17:16) I brought him to your disciples, but²⁶ they were not able to heal him."

(Mat 17:17) Jesus answered,²⁷ "You²⁸ unbelieving²⁹ and perverse generation! How much longer³⁰ must I be with you? How much longer must I endure³¹ you?³² Bring him here to me."

(Mat 17:18) Then³³ Jesus rebuked³⁴ the demon and it came out of him, and the boy was healed from that moment.

(Mat 17:19) Then the disciples came³⁵ to Jesus privately and said, "Why couldn't we cast it out?"

(Mat 17:20) He told them, "It was because of your little faith. I tell you the truth,³⁶ if you have faith the size of³⁷ a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; nothing³⁸ will be impossible for you."³⁹

(Mat 17:21) (*TEXT OMITTED*)

(Mat 17:22) ***Second Prediction of Jesus' Death and Resurrection***

When⁴⁰ they gathered together in Galilee, Jesus told them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men."⁴¹

(Mat 17:23) They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." And they became greatly distressed.

(Mat 17:24) ***The Temple Tax***

After⁴² they arrived in Capernaum,⁴³ the collectors of the temple tax⁴⁴ came to Peter and said, "Your teacher pays the double drachma tax, doesn't he?"

(Mat 17:25) He said, "Yes." When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first,⁴⁵ "What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect tolls or taxes — from their sons⁴⁶ or from foreigners?"

(Mat 17:26) After he said, "From foreigners," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons⁴⁷ are free.

(Mat 17:27) But so that we don't offend them, go to the lake and throw out a hook. Take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a four drachma coin.⁴⁸ Take that and give it to them for me and you."

(Mat 18:1) ***Questions About the Greatest***

At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

(Guzik)

Mat 18:1-35

Matthew 18 - Qualities of Kingdom Citizens

A. The heart of a child and care for God's little ones.

1. (Mat_18:1) The disciples ask a question.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

a. **Who then is greatest:** The disciples were often concerned about the question of greatness. They seem to ask this question thinking that Jesus has already chosen one of them as **greatest**, or as if they want Jesus to decide among them right then. We can imagine the disciples arguing among themselves about which one was the greatest (as they did in Luk_22:46 and other places), and then saying, "Let's let Jesus settle this!"

2. (Mat_18:2-4) Jesus sets a child as an example of humility. Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

a. **Jesus called a little child to Him:** We think that Jesus should have answered the question, "who is the greatest?" by saying, "Hey dummies - *I'm* the greatest." Instead, Jesus draws their attention to His *nature* by having them look at a child as an example.

b. **Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven:** How the disciples' faces must have fallen when Jesus said this! They knew that in that day, children were regarded more as property than individuals. It was understood that they were to be seen and not heard. Jesus said we have to take this kind of humble place to **enter the kingdom**, much less be the greatest in the kingdom.

i. Children are not threatening; we aren't afraid of meeting a five-year old in a dark alley.

When we have a tough, intimidating presence, we aren't like Jesus.

ii. Children are not good at deceiving; they are pretty miserable failures at fooling their parents. When we are good at hiding ourselves and deceiving others, we aren't like Jesus.

iii. Jesus knew that we must be **converted** to be like little children. It isn't in our nature to take the low place and to humble ourselves.

c. **Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom:** Jesus then addressed the issue of *greatness*. When we most fulfill the humble place a child had in that culture, we are then on our way to greatness.

i. We know that one Man was actually the **greatest in the kingdom:** Jesus Christ. This means that Jesus Himself was humble like a little child. He wasn't concerned about his own status. He didn't have to be the center of attention. He could not deceive, and He didn't have an intimidating presence.

3. (Mat_18:5-6) Woe to the one who causes one of these to stumble!

"Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

a. **Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me:** Since the nature of Jesus is like one of these little children, how we treat children shows how we regard the nature of Jesus.

b. **Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin:** Jesus takes it seriously when one of His **little ones** is led into sin. **Little ones** does not only mean children, but those who humble themselves like children as Jesus described.

i. It is a wicked thing to sin, and it is a far greater evil to lead others into sin. But leading one of Jesus' **little ones** into sin is far worse, because you then *initiate* someone into an instance or a pattern of sin that corrupts whatever innocence they had.

c. **It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea:** A severe punishment is described here. It would

be **better** for the offending one to receive this punishment of the millstone.

4. (Mat_18:7) Offenses are inevitable, but we are to have no part in offending.

“Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”

a. **Woe to the world because of offenses!** The first **woe** is a cry of pity for a world in danger of offenses. The second **woe** is a warning to the one who brings or introduces evil to others.

b. **Woe to that man by whom the offense comes:** We live in a fallen world, and it is inevitable that sin and hurt and **offenses** come. Yet the person who brings the **offense** is guilty before God, and has no excuse.

i. We can imagine Joseph’s brothers saying, “Look at how wonderfully God used it when we sold our brother Joseph into slavery. God used it to send him ahead of us into Egypt and save the whole family. Because God used it for good, it must not have been sin for us.” Jesus would answer, “Not at all. **Offenses must come**, that is for certain. And God will use the **offenses** of others in our life. But you are still responsible as the one **by whom the offense comes**.”

ii. This teaches us that we can *let go* of the anger and the bitterness for what people have done against us. God promised to deal with those **by whom the offense comes**.

iii. This teaches us that in Jesus Christ, *no other person can wreck our life*. If they bring offense in our life, God will deal with them, but not forsake us - not in time or eternity.

5. (Mat_18:8-9) In light of the judgment awaiting those who cause others to sin, It is worth it to sacrifice in the battle against sin.

“If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to

enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.”

a. **If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you:** Some people only keep from sin if it is easy or convenient to do it. Jesus warns us that we must be willing to *sacrifice* in fighting against sin, that nothing is worse than facing the wrath of a righteous God. It really is **better** to sacrifice in the battle against sin *now* than to face the punishment of eternity later.

b. **If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you:** There are significant problems in taking these words as literal instruction instead of conveying an attitude. The problem is not only from the obvious physical harm that one might bring upon themselves, but more so in the problem that bodily mutilation does not go *far enough* in controlling sin. We need to be transformed from the inside out.

i. If I cut off my right hand, I can still sin with my left. If my left eye is gouged out, my right eye can still sin - and if all such members are gone, I can still sin in my heart and mind. God calls us to a far more radical transformation than any sort of bodily mutilation can address.

6. (Mat_18:10) Another reference to our responsibility to guard God’s **little ones**.

“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”

a. **Do not despise one of these little ones:** Because God’s mind and eye is always on His **little ones**, we do well to treat them with love and respect. God protects the humble.

b. **Their angels:** This is often taken as a reference to “guardian angels.” We certainly do have angels watching over us and ministering to us (Heb_1:14), but there is no need to limit it to only one specific “guardian angel.”

7. (Mat_18:11-14) Disciples must share Jesus' heart and care for individuals.

"For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

a. **Does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?**

This story demonstrates the value God places on individuals. Jesus exhorts us to reflect the same care.

b. **Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish:**

Some take this as an assurance that before the age of accountability, children are saved. But this is absolutely certain only of the children of believers (1Co_7:14). For the rest, we must trust in God's mercy and the knowledge that the judge of all the earth will do right (Gen_18:25).

B. Relating to one another in the Kingdom Community.

1. (Mat_18:15) If you are sinned against, go and confront the guilty party directly.

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother."

a. **Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone:** It is essential that we go to the offending brother first - not griping and gossiping to others, especially under the guise of "sharing a prayer request" or "seeking counsel." Instead, speak to the party directly.

i. It would be wrong for anyone to take Jesus' word here as a *command* to confront **your brother** with *every* sin they commit against you. The Bible says we should b. **If he**

hears you, you have gained your brother: You have **gained** him in two ways. First, the problem has been cleared up. Perhaps you realized that he was right in some ways and he realized you were right in some ways, but the problem is resolved. Second, you have **gained** him because you have not *wronged* your brother by going to others with gossip and half the side of a dispute.

2. (Mat_18:16-18) If one among the church is adamantly unrepentant, they are to be removed from fellowship.

“But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

a. **If he will not hear, take with you one or two more:** The circle of people in the situation only becomes wider as the offending party refuses to listen. If the stubborn, unrepentant attitude remains they are to be refused fellowship (**let him be to you like a heathen**).

i. This sense of being refused full standing and participation in the body of Christ is what Paul meant when he said to *deliver such a one to Satan* (1Co_5:1-8). There is a sense in which the unrepentant one is chastened by their being placed outside of the “protection” of fellowship.

b. **Like a heathen and a tax collector:** Even so, the unrepentant one must be treated just as we should treat a **heathen and a tax collector** - with great love, with the goal of bringing about a full repentance and reconciliation.

c. **Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven:** If this process is done humbly and according to the Word, this is quite binding in the eyes of God, even if the unrepentant ones just go to another church.

3. (Mat_18:19-20) The power and blessing in fellowship that is denied the unrepentant.

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

a. **If two of you agree on earth:** There is real power in agreement in prayer and in the presence of Jesus.

This is exactly what the unrepentant ones miss out on.

i. In the ancient Greek, **agree** is literally “to symphonize.” Jesus wants us to complement each other like a great orchestra.

b. **It will be done for them by My Father in heaven:** We must take advantage of the power of agreement, which works on the principle related in Deu_32:30, where one sets a thousand enemies to flight, but two set ten thousand enemies to flight. There is real power the prayer of agreement.

c. **Where two or three are gathered together in My name:** Gathering in the **name** of Jesus means gathering according to His character and will, and gathering in a manner Jesus would endorse. This is when Jesus is really present (**I am there in the midst of them**).

4. (Mat_18:21-22) Peter’s question about forgiveness and Jesus’ answer.

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”

a. **Up to seven times?** Peter, in light of what Jesus said about agreement and unity, tries to sound extremely loving by suggesting forgiving a repentant brother up to seven times when three times was the accepted limit taught by the Jewish rabbis of that time.

b. **Up to seventy times seven:** Jesus answers unexpectedly, saying we are to forgive the repentant an unlimited number of times. Surely, Jesus didn’t mean to have us count to 490.

5. (Mat_18:23-34) The parable of the unforgiving servant.

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.”

a. **Who owed him ten thousand talents:** Though commentators list the modern value of 10,000 talents as anywhere between \$12 million and \$1 billion, the figure clearly represents an unpayable debt.

b. **His master commanded that he be sold:** The master would sell the man who could not pay, his family, and all he had. But this would do virtually nothing to pay off the debt, because slaves at their top price were sold at a talent apiece.

c. **The master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt:**

The master shows mercy prompted by compassion, forgiving a debt that obviously could never be repaid, no matter what promises the servant made.

d. **One of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii:** The forgiven servant confronts another man about a debt of 100 denarii (which was equal to 100 day's wages). This was not an insignificant amount, but it was almost nothing compared to the debt forgiven by his master.

e. **Have patience with me, and I will pay you all:** The man who owed 100 denarii uses the exact same plea that brought man forgiven the great debt mercy. But it gains nothing, because the forgiven servant puts the man into a debtor's prison.

f. **You wicked servant . . . delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him:** The master hears of this and is angry. He then gives the first servant what he deserved - justice instead of mercy.

6. (Mat_18:35) Jesus applies the story: genuine forgiveness, from the heart, is required of all who have been forgiven.

"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

a. **So My heavenly Father also will do to you:** God has forgiven you such a great debt, that any debt owed to you is absolutely insignificant in comparison. No man can possibly offend me to the extent that my sins have offended God. This principle must be applied in the little things done to us, but also to the great things done unto us.

b. **If each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses:** In context, Jesus is speaking only of forgiving the repentant. When a person is unrepentant or unaware of their sin against us, we can't really forgive them, though we can (and must) make a promise of forgiveness to God (as Jesus did in Luk_23:34). We must keep our hearts open for reconciliation at the slightest true repentance and keeping ourselves free from bitterness.

c. However, we are under strict obligation to forgive the repentant, and without judging the validity of their repentance (Luk_17:4). When we do not, we pay a terrible price for our unforgiveness.

i. Much of the chastening that we as Christians undergo can be traced to our hard and oftentimes relentless attitude toward those who offend us. Who knows how much blessing and fruit is hindered because of unforgiveness?

ii. They may not deserve forgiveness, but for your sake, it is best to forgive. You are the one most hurt by your unforgiveness.

d. Can we lose our salvation from unforgiveness? Unforgiveness is not the “unforgivable sin”, but forgiveness is the mark of one truly forgiven. Habitually unforgiving heart shows a bitterness that may mean that such a person’s heart has never really been touched by the love of Jesus.

i. Our salvation may be sure, yet we may be “tortured” by our own unforgiveness towards others.

(Mat 18:2) He called a child, had him stand among them,

(Mat 18:3) and said, "I tell you the truth,¹ unless you turn around and become like little children,² you will never³ enter the kingdom of heaven!

(Mat 18:4) Whoever then humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 18:5) And whoever welcomes⁴ a child like this in my name welcomes me.

(Mat 18:6) "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,⁵ it would be better for him to have a huge millstone⁶

hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea.⁷

(Mat 18:7) Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It⁸ is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come.

(Mat 18:8) If⁹ your hand or your foot causes you to sin,¹⁰ cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life

crippled or lame than to have¹¹ two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

(Mat 18:9) And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have¹²

two eyes and be thrown into fiery hell.¹³

(Mat 18:10) ***The Parable of the Lost Sheep***

"See that you do not disdain one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.¹⁴

(Mat 18:11) *(TEXT OMITTED)*

(Mat 18:12) What do you think? If someone¹⁵ owns a hundred¹⁶ sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go look for the one that went astray?¹⁷

(Mat 18:13) And if he finds it, I tell you the truth,¹⁸ he will rejoice more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

(Mat 18:14) In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that one of these little ones be lost.

(Mat 18:15) ***Restoring Christian Relationships***

"If¹⁹ your brother²⁰ sins,²¹ go and show him his fault²² when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother.

(Mat 18:16) But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that ***at the testimony of two or three witnesses every***

matter may be established.²³

(Mat 18:17) If²⁴ he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If²⁵ he refuses to listen to the church, treat him like²⁶ a Gentile²⁷ or a tax collector.²⁸

(Mat 18:18) "I tell you the truth,²⁹ whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.

(Mat 18:19) Again, I tell you the truth,³⁰ if two of you on earth agree about whatever you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.³¹

(Mat 18:20) For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them."

(Mat 18:21) Then Peter came to him and said, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother³² who sins against me? As many as seven times?"

(Mat 18:22) Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times!³³

(Mat 18:23) ***The Parable of the Unforgiving Slave***

"For this reason, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves.³⁴

(Mat 18:24) As³⁵ he began settling his accounts, a man who owed ten thousand talents³⁶ was brought to him.

(Mat 18:25) Because³⁷ he was not able to repay it,³⁸ the lord ordered him to be sold, along with³⁹ his wife, children, and whatever he possessed, and repayment to be made.

(Mat 18:26) Then the slave threw himself to the ground⁴⁰ before him, saying,⁴¹ 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything.'

(Mat 18:27) The lord had compassion on that slave and released him, and forgave him the debt.

(Mat 18:28) After⁴² he went out, that same slave found one of his fellow slaves who owed him one hundred silver coins.⁴³ So⁴⁴ he grabbed him by the throat and started to choke him,⁴⁵ saying, 'Pay back what you owe me!'⁴⁶

(Mat 18:29) Then his fellow slave threw himself down and begged him,⁴⁷ 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you.'

(Mat 18:30) But he refused. Instead, he went out and threw him in prison until he repaid the debt.

(Mat 18:31) When⁴⁸ his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were very upset and went and told their lord everything that had taken place.

(Mat 18:32) Then his lord called the first slave⁴⁹ and said to him, 'Evil slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me!

(Mat 18:33) Should you not have shown mercy to your fellow slave, just as I showed it to you?'

(Mat 18:34) And in anger his lord turned him over to the prison guards to torture him⁵⁰ until he repaid all he owed.

(Mat 18:35) So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive your⁵¹ brother⁵² from your heart."

(Mat 19:1) ***Questions About Divorce***

Now when¹ Jesus finished these sayings, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan River.²

(Guzik)

Mat 19:1-30

MATTHEW 19 - JESUS TEACHES ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, RICHES AND DISCIPLESHIP

A. Jesus teaches on marriage, divorce, and celibacy.

1. (Mat_19:1-2) Jesus is now on the way to Jerusalem, the visit to Jerusalem which will ultimately end in His death and resurrection.

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, *that* He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

2. (Mat_19:3) The Pharisees attempt to trap Jesus.

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?"

a. **Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife:** Divorce was a controversial topic in Jesus' day, with two main schools of thought, centered around two of its most famous proponents. The first was the school of Rabbi Shammai (a strict and unpopular view) and second was the school of Rabbi Hillel (a lax and popular view).

b. **For just any reason:** These words were the center of the debate. Each school of thought understood that the Mosaic law gave permission for divorce in Deu_24:1 : *When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house.* Each side knew and believed Deu_24:1; the question was, "What constitutes *uncleanness*?"

i. The school of Rabbi Shammai understood that *uncleanness* meant sexual immorality, and said that was the only valid reason for divorce. The school of Rabbi Hillel understood *uncleanness* to mean *any* sort of indiscretion, even to the point where burning the breakfast was considered valid grounds for divorce.

c. **Testing Him:** So in their question, the Pharisees are try to get Jesus to side with one teaching or the other. If He sides with the lax school of Rabbi Hillel, it is clear that Jesus does not take the Law of Moses seriously. If He sides with the strict school of Rabbi Shammai, then Jesus looses face before the multitude, who generally liked access to an easy divorce. They believe they have caught Jesus on the horns of a dilemma.

3. (Mat_19:4-6) Jesus' first answer to the Pharisees: get back to marriage.

And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

a. **Have you not read:** The Pharisees wanted to talk about divorce, but Jesus will talk about marriage, indeed the first marriage - between Adam and Eve. This emphasis on

marriage, rather than divorce, is a wise approach for anyone interested in keeping a marriage together.

i. Divorce cannot be seen as an option when things are hard. Marriage is like a mirror; it reflects what we put into it. If one has divorce readily in their mind as a convenient option, divorce will be much more likely.

b. **He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female”** : In quoting Gen_1:27, Jesus indicates first that *God* has made men and women different, and that *God* is the one who joins men and women together in marriage. In this, Jesus asserts God’s “ownership” over marriage; it is God’s institution, not man’s, so His rules apply.

c. **What God has joined together**: Next, Jesus reminds the Pharisees that marriage is spiritually binding before God. Marriage is not merely a social contract, and as God has joined, He expects man to honor that joining and to keep the marriage together.

d. By bringing the issue back to the foundation of marriage, Jesus makes it plain that couples must forsake their singleness (**a man shall leave his father and mother**), and come together in a **one flesh** relationship that is both a fact (**they are . . . one flesh**) and a goal (**shall become one flesh**).

4. (Mat_19:7-9) The Mosaic controversy: Jesus’ second answer.

They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

a. **Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away**: The Pharisees wrongly thought that God *commanded* divorce where there was

uncleanness. A Rabbinic saying of that day went: "If a man has a bad wife, it is a religious duty to divorce her." But Jesus noted the difference between "**command**" and "**permitted**" -

God never commands divorce, but He does permit it.

b. **Because of the hardness of your hearts:** Divorce is never commanded, but **permitted** by God in certain circumstances, and God permits it **because of the hardness** of human hearts.

i. Sometimes the heart of the *offending party* is hard, and they will not do what must be done to reconcile the relationship. Sometimes the heart of the *offended party* is hard, and they refuse to reconcile and get past the offence even with there is contrition and repentance. Often the **hardness of heart** is on *both sides*.

c. **Except for sexual immorality:** Jesus interprets the meaning of the word *uncleanness* in the Mosaic law - it refers to **sexual immorality**, not just anything that might displease the husband. Therefore, divorce - and the freedom to remarry without sin - is only permitted in the case of **sexual immorality**.

i. The ancient Greek word for **sexual immorality** is *porneia*. It is a broad word, covering a wide span of sexual impropriety. One may be guilty of *porneia* without actually having consummated an act of adultery.

ii. To this permission for divorce, Paul adds the case of abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1Co_7:15).

iii. We note that incompatibility, not loving each other anymore, brutality, and misery are not grounds for divorce, though they may be proper grounds for a separation and consequent "celibacy within marriage" as Paul indicates in 1Co_7:11).

d. **And marries another, commits adultery:** The reason why a person who does not have a legitimate divorce **commits adultery** upon remarrying is because they *are not* divorced in the eyes of God. Since their old marriage was

never dissolved on Biblical grounds, that marriage is still valid and they are actually guilty of bigamy and adultery.

i. We must come to grips with the fact that marriage, as a promise made to God, our spouse and the world, is a *binding promise*, and cannot be broken at our own discretion.

5. (Mat_19:10-12) The disciples ask a good question: if marriage is so binding, is celibacy better?

His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry." But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given: "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*. "

a. **If such is the case . . . it is better not to marry:** The disciples understood Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce clearly. They understood that it was not a commitment to be entered into quickly or lightly, and considered that since marriage is so binding before God, then maybe **it is better not to marry**.

b. **All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:** Jesus recognized that celibacy is good for some, for the one **who is able to accept it** (such as the apostle Paul, 1Co_7:7-9).

c. **For there are eunuchs who were born thus:** The term *eunuch* was used figuratively for those who voluntarily abstain for marriage. Jesus doesn't necessarily mean biological eunuchs, though He certainly includes them among those who abstain from marriage.

6. (Mat_19:13-15) Jesus blesses little children.

Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And He laid *His* hands on them and departed from there.

a. **Then little children were brought to Him:** How marvelous that in the midst of Jesus' teaching on marriage, parents bring their children to be blessed. Today, parents should still bring their children to Jesus; He wants to bless them and welcome them into **the kingdom of heaven**.

b. **Let the little children come to Me:** This also shows us something remarkable about Jesus' character. He was the kind of man that children like - and children are often astute judges of character.

B. Jesus teaches on riches and following Him.

1. (Mat_19:16-17) A man asks Jesus the most important question one can ask.

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

a. **What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life:** This question demonstrates that this man, like all people by nature, has an orientation towards a works-righteousness.

b. **Why do you call Me good?** In this, Jesus does not deny His own goodness. Instead, He asks the man, "Do you understand what you are saying when you call Me good?"

c. **If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments:** Jesus' answer to the man's question is straightforward.

If you want to gain eternal life by your doing, you must **keep the commandments** - all of them, and in the fullest sense.

2. (Mat_19:18-20) Jesus tests him by "the second table of the law" - the aspects of the Mosaic Law that deal with man's relationship to men.

He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and *your* mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as

yourself.” The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

a. **You shall not murder . . .** : Jesus asked the man about the commandments which primarily deal with a man’s relation to man. In response, the young man claimed **All these things I have kept from my youth** - claiming to fulfill all God’s commands regarding how we must treat other people.

b. **All these things I have kept from my youth**: It is fair to ask if this man really had kept these commandments. It is likely that he actually did keep them in a way that made him righteous in the eyes of men - in the sense that Paul could say *concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless* in Php_3:6. But he certainly did not keep them in the full and perfect sense in which Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount.

i. We can also know that this man had not perfectly kept the law, because he still knew that there was something missing in his life (**What do I still lack?**) There was still something lacking in his life, reflecting a lack in his relationship with God.

c. Mar_10:21 tells us that Jesus loved him in reply. Jesus has compassion on this man, so misguided as to think that he really could justify himself before God.

3. (Mat_19:21-22) Jesus tests him by “the first table of the law” - the aspects of the Mosaic law which deal with man’s relationship to God.

Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

a. **Sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me**: The call to forsake everything and follow Jesus is a call to put

God first in all things. It is full obedience to the first table of the law, which dealt with a man's relation to God.

b. **He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions:** In this, the wealthy questioner fails utterly. Money is his god; he is guilty of idolatry, and this is why Jesus, knowing the man's heart, asked him to renounce his possessions.

c. Both tables of the law will test every person before God. It isn't enough to do good by our fellow man and be decent folk; we must do right by God, and give Him the glory and honor He deserves

4. (Mat_19:23-26) Riches are an obstacle to the kingdom.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

a. **Assuredly, I say to you:** We should not diminish the strength of Jesus words, nor fail to see their application in our own affluent society. Who among us would not be considered richer than this rich young ruler was?

b. **It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven:** Riches are a snare because they tend to make us satisfied with this life, instead of longing for the age to come. As well, often riches must be acquired at the expense of acquiring God.

c. **They were exceedingly amazed:** The great amazement of the disciples is based on the assumption that riches were always a sign of God's blessing and favor.

d. **With God all things are possible:** However, God's grace is sufficient to save the rich man; we have the examples of people like Zaccheus, Joseph of Arimathea, and

Barnabas - rich men who still were able to put God first, not their riches.

5. (Mat_19:27-30) Peter's blunt question: what do *we* get for following You?

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

a. **Therefore what shall we have?** In contrast to the rich young ruler, the disciples did leave all to follow Jesus - so what will be their reward? Jesus tells of special honor for the disciples: **you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** The disciples will have a special role in the future judgment, probably in the sense of administration in the millennial Kingdom.

i. As well, the apostles had the honor of helping to provide a singular foundation for the church (Eph_2:20), and have a special tribute in the New Jerusalem (Rev_20:14).

b. **Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters:** But there will be universal honor for all who sacrifice for Jesus' sake; what ever has been given up for Him will be returned to us a hundred times over - in addition to **everlasting life.**

i. **Hundredfold** is obviously not literal in a *material* sense. Otherwise, Jesus promises a hundred mothers and a hundred wives. Jesus will do more than make up what we have given up for His sake, but the return may be spiritual instead of material. **Hundredfold** certainly *is* literally true in the spiritual sense.

ii. The principle stands: God will be a debtor to no man. It is impossible for us to out-give God.

(Mat 19:2) Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

(Mat 19:3) Then some Pharisees³ came to him in order to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful⁴ to divorce a wife for any cause?"⁵

(Mat 19:4) He answered, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator ***made them male and female***,⁶

(Mat 19:5) and said, ' ***For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh***'?⁷

(Mat 19:6) So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

(Mat 19:7) They said to him, "Why then did Moses command us ***to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce*** her?"⁸

(Mat 19:8) Jesus⁹ said to them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts,¹⁰ but from the beginning it was not this way.

(Mat 19:9) Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery."

(Mat 19:10) The¹¹ disciples said to him, "If this is the case of a husband with a wife, it is better not to marry!"

(Mat 19:11) He¹² said to them, "Not everyone can accept this statement, except those to whom it has been given.

(Mat 19:12) For there are some eunuchs who were that way from birth,¹³ and some who were made eunuchs¹⁴ by others,¹⁵ and some who became eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who is able to accept this should accept it."

(Mat 19:13) ***Jesus and Little Children***

Then little children were brought to him for him to lay his hands on them and pray.¹⁶ But the disciples scolded those who brought them.¹⁷

(Mat 19:14) But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."¹⁸

(Mat 19:15) And he placed his hands on them and went on his way.¹⁹

(Mat 19:16) ***The Rich Young Man***

Now²⁰ someone came up to him and said, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to gain eternal life?"

(Mat 19:17) He said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

(Mat 19:18) "Which ones?" he asked. Jesus replied, " ***Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony,***

(Mat 19:19) ***honor your father and mother,*** ²¹ and ***love your neighbor as yourself.***"²²

(Mat 19:20) The young man said to him, "I have wholeheartedly obeyed²³ all these laws.²⁴ What do I still lack?"

(Mat 19:21) Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give the money²⁵ to the poor, and you will have treasure²⁶ in heaven. Then come, follow me."

(Mat 19:22) But when the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he was very rich.²⁷

(Mat 19:23) Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth,²⁸ it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven!

(Mat 19:24) Again I say,²⁹ it is easier for a camel³⁰ to go through the eye of a needle³¹ than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God."

(Mat 19:25) The³² disciples were greatly astonished when they heard this and said, "Then who can be saved?"³³

(Mat 19:26) Jesus³⁴ looked at them and replied, "This is impossible for mere humans,³⁵ but for God all things are possible."

(Mat 19:27) Then Peter said³⁶ to him, "Look,³⁷ we have left everything to follow you!³⁸ What then will there be for us?"

(Mat 19:28) Jesus³⁹ said to them, "I tell you the truth:⁴⁰ In the age when all things are renewed,⁴¹ when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging⁴² the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Mat 19:29) And whoever has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much⁴³ and will inherit eternal life.

(Mat 19:30) But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

(Mat 20:1) ***Workers in the Vineyard***

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner¹ who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.

(Guzik)

Mat 20:1-34

MATTHEW 20 - JESUS TEACHES OF GRACE, GREATNESS, AND SERVICE

A. The parable of the workers in the vineyard.

1. (Mat_20:1-16) A parable to explain the words of Jesus from the previous chapter.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they

went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.' So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received *it*, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take *what is* yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?

Or is your eye evil because I am good?' So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

a. Jesus is answering a question from Mat_19:27 : *See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?* His reply comes in stages.

o First, a promise of reward (Mat_19:28).

o Second, a warning that God's manner of distributing reward is not necessarily the manner of men (*many who are the first will be last, and the last first*, Mat_19:30).

o Finally, this parable that illustrates the principle that God's manner of rewarding is not like man's practice of giving rewards.

b. **To hire laborers for his vineyard:** The landowner went to the market place, which was the gathering place for day laborers. A man who wanted to work came there first thing

in the morning, carrying his tools, and waited until someone hired him.

c. **Early in the morning** is literally “at dawn;” this was usually reckoned to be about 6:00 in the morning.

The **third hour** was about 9 am; the **sixth hour** was about 12 noon; the **eleventh hour** was about 5:00 in the evening.

d. **Whatever is right I will give you . . . whatever is right you will receive:** The landowner promised the earliest workers a day’s wage (**a denarius a day**). The other workers hired through the day were not promised a *specific* wage, only **whatever is right**. He promised to reward all the later workers fairly.

e. **Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first:** These are day laborers, so they are paid at the end of each day. When it came time to pay the workers, the men hired last were paid first - and paid for a full day of work!

i. The men who were hired at the **eleventh hour** - who worked only about one hour - were obviously elated about being paid first, and being paid for a full day.

ii. The men who worked for the landowner all day saw the men who worked for only an hour walk away from the pay table, and started thinking, “If the landowner is paying these guys a full day’s pay for one hour’s work, then we will get far more!”

iii. Yet, the men hired first - early in the day, and who had worked all day - got paid exactly what the landowner had promised them (**a denarius a day**). They would obviously resent being paid the same amount as those who came late in the day.

f. **They complained against the landowner:** After being paid, the men hired first take up their complaint with the landowner - who reminds them that he has been completely fair to them (**Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?**), and rebuked them

for their jealousy and resentment of the landowner's generosity towards others.

i. The "evil eye" was a jealous, envious eye. The landowner asks the man if he is jealous because the landowner was generous to other people.

ii. "An *evil eye* was a phrase in use, among the ancient Jews, to denote an *envious, covetous* man or disposition; a man who repined at his neighbour's prosperity, loved his own money, and would do nothing in the way of charity for God's sake." (Clarke)

2. What the parable means and how it applies.

a. Peter, and all the disciples, knew they had given up a great deal to follow Jesus. Peter wanted to know what they would get in return. Jesus, through this parable assured Peter and the disciples that they will be rewarded - but the principle of *many who are first will be last and the last first* means that God may not reward as man expects.

b. This is the essence of God's *grace*, when He rewards and blesses man according to His will and pleasure, not necessarily according to what men deserve.

i. The system of law is easy to figure out: you get what you deserve. The system of grace is foreign to us: God deals with us according to who *He* is, not according to who *we* are.

c. It is important to see that the landowner did not treat anyone *unfairly*, though he was more *generous* to some than to others. We can be assured that God will never, ever be unfair to us, though He may - for His own purpose and pleasure - bestow greater blessing on someone else who seems less deserving.

i. God's grace always operates righteously. He never does anything unfair in grace. God will never be *less* than fair, but He reserves the right to be *more* than fair according to the pleasure and riches of His grace.

d. This parable is not a perfect illustration of God's grace, because the principle of working and deserving is involved. Grace does not give us *more* blessing than we deserve - it

gives blessing to us completely apart from the principle of deserving.

i. In this parable, Jesus shows that God can give to us out of the abundance of His goodness, completely apart from what we deserve.

ii. Living under grace is sort of a two edged sword. Under grace, we can't come to God

complaining, "Hey, don't I deserve better than this?" because God will reply, "So, do you really want Me to give you what you deserve?"

e. So, the disciples should expect to be rewarded - but should not be surprised if, when rewards are distributed, God will reward others in unexpected ways.

B. Jesus teaches about status in the kingdom.

1. (Mat_20:17-19) Jesus again reveals the fate waiting for Him at Jerusalem. This example of Jesus sets a stark contrast for the following section.

Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

a. **The Son of Man will be betrayed:** Seemingly, the disciples did not really listen when Jesus said these things. Their expectation was so focused on Jesus establishing an immediate political kingdom, and these words from Jesus were so contrary to that anticipation, these words just went over their heads.

2. (Mat_20:20-21) The mother of James and John asks for a place of special status for her sons.

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

a. **Grant that these two sons of mine may sit:** She is really asking this question on behalf of her sons; we know this because of who Jesus replies to in Mat_20:22-23.

3. (Mat_20:22-23) Jesus answers James and John: when you ask for a place of special status, do you know what you ask for?

But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father."

a. **Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink:**

Their answer ("**We are able**") seems to come a little too quick. Jesus recognized that they didn't really understand, but they would.

b. **You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with:** Both James and John had to be **baptized** in suffering as Jesus was, but their "cups" and "baptisms" were different. James was the first martyr among the apostles, and John was the only apostle to *not* die through martyrdom - though not from a lack of trying.

4. (Mat_20:24-28) The disciples' reaction; Jesus sets forth true greatness.

And when the ten heard *it*, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave;

just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

a. **They were greatly displeased:** The other ten disciples mistakenly thought that a unique honor had just been bestowed on James and John. They did not know that Jesus could have made the same promise to any of them (if they really wanted it!).

b. **Yet it shall not be so among you:** Their desire for position and status showed they didn't know the nature of Jesus yet, in respect to leadership and power. **The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them -**

and those who exercise power or authority in the church today as “lording it over” others still don't understand the Jesus style of leadership and life.

i. **Yet it shall not be so among you** is a stinging rebuke to the manner in which the modern church looks to the world for both its substance and style. Plainly, the church isn't to operate the way the world does.

c. **Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant:** In the Kingdom community, status, money, popularity should never be the prerequisites for leadership. Humble service is the greatest - and only - prerequisite, as exemplified by Jesus' own ministry.

d. **Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve:** Real ministry is done for the benefit of those ministered to, not for the benefit of the minister. Many people are in the ministry for what they can receive (either materially or emotionally) from their people instead of for what they can give.

C. Jesus heals two blind men.

1. (Mat_20:29-31) Two blind men gain the attention of Jesus. Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!” Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they

cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

a. **When they heard that Jesus was passing by:** They knew this might be their last time to meet Jesus.

They had the desperation appropriate for those who know that *today* is the day of salvation.

b. **Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!** The earnestness of these men is marvelous; they are *desperate* to be healed, and ignore the crowd trying to quiet them (**they cried out all the more**).

c. However, in their desperation, they glorify Jesus. They ascribe to Him full honor with the title **Lord, Son of David**.

2. (Mat_20:32-34) Jesus heals the two blind men.

So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

a. **What do you want Me to do for you?** This is a wonderful, simple question God has not stopped asking. Sometimes we go without before the Lord simply because we will not answer this question, we *do not have because we do not ask* (Jam_4:2).

b. Why did Jesus ask this question? He knew they were blind. He knew what they needed and what they wanted, but God still delights when we tell Him our needs as a constant expression of our trust and reliance on Him.

c. **And they immediately followed Him:** This was a great result; not only were they healed, they also followed the One who did great things for them.

(Mat 20:2) And after agreeing with the workers for the standard wage,² he sent them into his vineyard.

(Mat 20:3) When it was about nine o'clock in the morning,³ he went out again and saw others standing around in the marketplace without work.

(Mat 20:4) He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too, and I will give you whatever is right.'

(Mat 20:5) So they went. When⁴ he went out again about noon and three o'clock that afternoon,⁵ he did the same thing.

(Mat 20:6) And about five o'clock that afternoon⁶ he went out and found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why are you standing here all day without work?'

(Mat 20:7) They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You go and work in the vineyard too.'

(Mat 20:8) When⁷ it was evening⁸ the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the workers and give the pay⁹ starting with the last hired until the first.'

(Mat 20:9) When those hired about five o'clock came, each received a full day's pay.¹⁰

(Mat 20:10) And when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each one also received the standard wage.

(Mat 20:11) When¹¹ they received it, they began to complain¹² against the landowner,

(Mat 20:12) saying, 'These last fellows worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us who bore the hardship and burning heat of the day.'

(Mat 20:13) And the landowner¹³ replied to one of them,¹⁴ 'Friend, I am not treating you unfairly. Didn't you agree with me to work for the standard wage?¹⁵

(Mat 20:14) Take what is yours and go. I¹⁶ want to give to this last man¹⁷ the same as I gave to you.

(Mat 20:15) Am I not¹⁸ permitted to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'¹⁹

(Mat 20:16) So the last will be first, and the first last."

(Mat 20:17) ***Third Prediction of Jesus' Death and Resurrection***

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem,²⁰ he took the twelve²¹ aside privately and said to them on the way, (Mat 20:18) "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law.²² They will condemn him to death, (Mat 20:19) and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged severely²³ and crucified.²⁴ Yet²⁵ on the third day, he will be raised."

(Mat 20:20) ***A Request for James and John***

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling down she asked him for a favor.²⁶ (Mat 20:21) He said to her, "What do you want?" She replied,²⁷ "Permit²⁸ these two sons of mine to sit, one at your²⁹ right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

(Mat 20:22) Jesus³⁰ answered, "You don't know what you are asking!³¹ Are you able to drink the cup I am about to drink?"³² They said to him, "We are able."³³

(Mat 20:23) He told them, "You will drink my cup,³⁴ but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to give. Rather, it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

(Mat 20:24) Now³⁵ when the other ten³⁶ heard this,³⁷ they were angry with the two brothers.

(Mat 20:25) But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them.

(Mat 20:26) It must not be this way among you! Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, (Mat 20:27) and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave³⁸ — (Mat 20:28) just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom³⁹ for many."

(Mat 20:29) ***Two Blind Men Healed***

As they were leaving Jericho,⁴⁰ a large crowd followed them.

(Mat 20:30) Two⁴¹ blind men were sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted,⁴² "Have mercy⁴³ on us, Lord, Son of David!"⁴⁴

(Mat 20:31) The⁴⁵ crowd scolded⁴⁶ them to get them to be quiet. But they shouted even more loudly, "Lord, have mercy on us,⁴⁷ Son of David!"

(Mat 20:32) Jesus stopped, called them, and said, "What do you want me to do for you?"

(Mat 20:33) They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened."

(Mat 20:34) Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

(Mat 21:1) ***The Triumphal Entry***

Now¹ when they approached Jerusalem² and came to Bethphage,³ at the Mount of Olives,⁴ Jesus sent two disciples, (Guzik)

Mat 21:1-46

MATTHEW 21 - THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' LAST WEEK

A. The triumphal entry.

1. (Mat_21:1-6) Jesus instructs His disciples regarding preparation for His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

a. **When they drew near Jerusalem:** As Jesus approaches Jerusalem for the last time in His earthly ministry, we see a

considerable contrast to Jesus' previous pattern of suppressing publicity. Here, Jesus deliberately works to fulfill prophecy, especially the prophecy of Daniel's Seventy Weeks, which many feel Jesus fulfilled to the exact day on His triumphal entry (Dan_9:24-27).

b. **Your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey:** Jesus comes in humility, yet with appropriate dignity. Instead of coming on a horse as a conquering general, He comes on a **colt**, as was customary for royalty. He comes as the Prince of Peace.

2. (Mat_21:7-11) Jesus receives and encourages adoration as the Messiah.

They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him* on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!" And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

a. **Hosanna to the Son of David!** This is open Messianic adoration of Jesus. They look to Jesus for salvation (**Hosanna** means "save now!"). They openly give Jesus the titles appropriate for the Messiah (**Son of David . . . He who comes in the name of the Lord**).

b. Jesus received, indeed encouraged this worship. Again, this is because *this is the day that the Lord has made* (Psa_118:24), the day when the Messiah comes as Savior to Jerusalem in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.

c. **When He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved:** Jesus also shows that He isn't afraid of chief priests and Pharisees. He knows they are plotting to kill Him, yet He comes openly to the city as Messiah.

B. Jesus cleanses the temple.

1. (Mat_21:12-13) Jesus forcibly stops the commercial desecration of the temple.

Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

a. **Drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple:** What was the problem? Profiteers, in cooperation with the priests, robbed visitors to Jerusalem by forcing them to purchase "approved"

sacrificial animals and currencies at inflated prices.

b. **My house shall be called a house of prayer:** As well, they did this in the outer courts of the temple, the only area where Gentiles could come and pray. Therefore, this place of prayer was made into an swap meet, and a dishonest one at that!

c. This ruins our conception of the "Sunday School Jesus" whose only quality is a bland love. In truth, Jesus was more than a man of compassion - He was also a man of bold action.

2. (Mat_21:14) In contrast to His work of tearing away evil, Jesus carries on God's compassionate work in the temple.

Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

a. **And He healed them:** After driving out the moneychangers and the merchants from the temple courts, Jesus didn't found "The Society for the Cleansing of the Temple." He got back to doing the business of the Messiah - showing the power of God in the context of compassion and mercy.

3. (Mat_21:15-17) The indignation of the Jewish leaders.

But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were

indignant and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise’?”

Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

a. **They were indignant:** The hypocrisy of the religious leaders is evident. Greed and theft in the temple didn’t bother them, but praise to Jesus did.

b. **Do You hear what these are saying?** Jesus answers them pointedly. Yes, He had heard **what these are saying** - and it is **perfected praise** in the ears of God.

C. The lesson of the fig tree.

1. (Mat_21:18-19) Jesus rebukes a fig tree.

Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away.

a. **Let no fruit grow on you ever again:** The fig tree instantly withered at the rebuke of Jesus. Why did He perform a “destructive” miracle?

b. **Found nothing on it but leaves:** Essentially, the tree was a picture of “false advertising,” having **leaves**, but no figs. This should not be the case with these particular fig trees, which customarily did not bear leaves apart from figs.

i. In this “acted-out-parable,” Jesus warns of coming judgment upon an unfruitful Israel.

God doesn’t want a people who are all leaves and no fruit.

c. Jesus’ two “destructive” miracles - this and the events that ended in the destruction of the herd of pigs (Mat_8:30-32) - were not directed towards people.

2. (Mat_21:20-22) How did Jesus do this?

And when the disciples saw *it*, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither away so soon?” So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith

and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

a. **How did the fig tree wither away so soon:** Jesus explains that this miracle was really the result of a prayer made in faith, and He encouraged His marveling disciples to also have this kind of faith, trusting that God will hear them also.

b. **And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive:** This promise of God's answer to the prayer of faith is made to disciples, not to the multitude.

D. Jesus answers the Jewish leaders.

1. (Mat_21:23-27) Jesus is questioned by the religious leaders as He comes back into the temple.

Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John; where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

a. **The chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching:** Note Jesus' fearlessness in going back into the temple. He is unafraid, and completely in control (Joh_10:18).

b. **By what authority are You doing these things?** The religious leaders raised the question of Jesus'

authority, and He raised the question of their competence to judge such an issue. Their reply proved that they were more interested in polling data from the multitude rather than the will of God, so Jesus didn't answer their question to Him.

i. Jesus kindly and compassionately met the needs of the hurting multitude. But He didn't show much patience with those who arrogantly questioned Him with the intention of trapping Jesus in His own words. Jesus never fell for the trap.

2. (Mat_21:28-32) The parable of the two sons.

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I *go*, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of *his* father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it*, you did not afterward relent and believe him."

a. **Which of the two did the will of his father?** The point of this parable is clear: what matters is living for God, not lip service. The religious leaders were good at talking a righteous walk, but their stubbornly unrepentant hearts show that repentant sinners will **enter the kingdom before** them.

b. **When you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him:** These proud religionists should have repented all the more when they saw the notorious sinners repenting, but they did not.

3. (Mat_21:33-41) The parable of the wicked servants.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-

time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

a. **He will destroy those wicked men miserably:** The message of this parable is clear enough. Even the proud religionists seem to understand what the wicked servants deserve. Those who rebel against their master this way deserve judgment.

b. Again, what the **owner of the vineyard** looked for **the fruits in their seasons**. In the same way, God looked for fruit from Israel's leadership, but found little (as shown in the fig tree incident).

4. (Mat_21:42-46) Jesus warns them of the result of their rejecting Him.

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

a. **The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone:** Jesus reminds them that their rejection of Him says more about their guilt and coming judgment than it says about Jesus Himself. Though they reject Him, He is still **the chief cornerstone**, fulfilling the great Messianic Psalms 118.

i. Like a painting from a great master, Jesus is not on trial - we are. These people rejected Jesus had to hear the eventual consequences of their rejection.

b. **Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder:** The choice before the religious leaders is the choice before every person. We can be **broken** in humble surrender before God or be completely broken in judgment.

c. **They sought to lay hands on Him:** Instead of repenting, the religious leaders respond with anger, continuing to increase the enormity of their sin of rejecting Jesus.

(Mat 21:2) telling them, "Go to the village ahead of you.⁵ Right away you will find a donkey tied there, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.

(Mat 21:3) If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, 'The Lord needs them,'⁶ and he will send them at once."

(Mat 21:4) This⁷ took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:⁸

(Mat 21:5) " ***Tell the people of Zion, 9***

***' Look, your king is coming to you,
unassuming and seated on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ' "***¹⁰

(Mat 21:6) So¹¹ the disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

(Mat 21:7) They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks¹² on them, and he sat on them.

(Mat 21:8) A¹³ very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them

on the road.

(Mat 21:9) The crowds that went ahead of him and those following kept shouting,¹⁴ " *Hosanna* ¹⁵ to the Son of David! ***Blessed is the***

one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁶ *Hosanna* in the highest!"

(Mat 21:10) As he entered Jerusalem the whole city was thrown into an uproar,¹⁷ saying, "Who is this?"

(Mat 21:11) And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth¹⁸ in Galilee."

(Mat 21:12) ***Cleansing the Temple***

Then¹⁹ Jesus entered the temple area²⁰ and drove out all those who were selling and buying in the temple courts,²¹ and turned over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.

(Mat 21:13) And he said to them, "It is written, ' ***My house will be called a house of prayer,*** '²² but you are turning it into ***a den*** ²³ ***of robbers!***"²⁴

(Mat 21:14) The blind and lame came to him in the temple courts, and he healed them.

(Mat 21:15) But when the chief priests and the experts in the law²⁵ saw the wonderful things he did and heard the children crying out in the temple courts,²⁶ " *Hosanna* to the Son of David," they became indignant (Mat 21:16) and said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, ' ***Out of the mouths of children and nursing infants you have prepared praise for yourself?***'"²⁷

(Mat 21:17) And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there.

(Mat 21:18) ***The Withered Fig Tree***

Now early in the morning, as he returned to the city, he was hungry.

(Mat 21:19) After noticing a fig tree²⁸ by the road he went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves. He said to it, "Never again will there be fruit from you!" And the fig tree withered at once.

(Mat 21:20) When the disciples saw it they were amazed, saying, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?"

(Mat 21:21) Jesus²⁹ answered them, "I tell you the truth,³⁰ if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.

(Mat 21:22) And whatever you ask in prayer, if you believe,³¹ you will receive."

(Mat 21:23) ***The Authority of Jesus***

Now after Jesus³² entered the temple courts,³³ the chief priests and elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority³⁴ are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

(Mat 21:24) Jesus³⁵ answered them, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.

(Mat 21:25) Where did John's baptism come from? From heaven or from people?"³⁶ They discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'

(Mat 21:26) But if we say, 'From people,' we fear the crowd, for they all consider John to be a prophet."

(Mat 21:27) So³⁷ they answered Jesus,³⁸ "We don't know."³⁹ Then he said to them, "Neither will I tell you⁴⁰ by what authority⁴¹ I am doing these things.

(Mat 21:28) ***The Parable of the Two Sons***

"What⁴² do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

(Mat 21:29) The boy answered,⁴³ 'I will not.' But later he had a change of heart⁴⁴ and went.

(Mat 21:30) The father⁴⁵ went to the other son and said the same thing. This boy answered,⁴⁶ 'I will, sir,' but did not go.

(Mat 21:31) Which of the two did his father's will?" They said, "The first."⁴⁷ Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth,⁴⁸ tax collectors⁴⁹

and prostitutes will go ahead of you into the kingdom of God!

(Mat 21:32) For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe. Although⁵⁰ you saw this, you did not later change your minds⁵¹ and believe him.

(Mat 21:33) ***The Parable of the Tenants***

"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner⁵² who planted a vineyard.⁵³ He put a fence around it, dug a pit for its winepress, and built a watchtower. Then⁵⁴ he leased it to tenant farmers⁵⁵ and went on a journey.

(Mat 21:34) When the harvest time was near, he sent his slaves⁵⁶ to the tenants to collect his portion of the crop.⁵⁷

(Mat 21:35) But the tenants seized his slaves, beat one,⁵⁸ killed another, and stoned another.

(Mat 21:36) Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them the same way.

(Mat 21:37) Finally he sent his son to them,⁵⁹ saying, 'They will respect my son.'

(Mat 21:38) But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and get his inheritance!'

(Mat 21:39) So⁶⁰ they seized him,⁶¹ threw him out of the vineyard,⁶² and killed him.

(Mat 21:40) Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

(Mat 21:41) They said to him, "He will utterly destroy those evil men! Then he will lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his portion at the harvest."

(Mat 21:42) Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

' The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. 63

This is from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?64

(Mat 21:43) For this reason I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people⁶⁵ who will produce its fruit.

(Mat 21:44) The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls will be crushed."⁶⁶

(Mat 21:45) When⁶⁷ the chief priests and the Pharisees⁶⁸ heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.

(Mat 21:46) They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, because the crowds⁶⁹ regarded him as a prophet.

(Mat 22:1) ***The Parable of the Wedding Banquet***

Jesus spoke¹ to them again in parables, saying:

(Guzik)

Mat 22:1-46

MATTHEW 22 - JESUS ANSWERS AND ASKS DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

A. The parable of the wedding feast.

1. (Mat_22:1-3) The first invitation is refused.

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to

call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.”

a. **They were not willing to come:** It seems strange that those invited refused an invitation to a royal wedding; but there is no *logical* reason why people refuse the good things God invites us to.

2. (Mat_22:4-7) The second invitation is refused and the king reacts.

“Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding.”’ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*. But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”

a. **But they made light of it and went their ways:** In the parable, Jesus gives an accurate description of the reaction of many to the gospel; many **made light of it**; others go back to their **business**.

b. **And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers:** The king rightfully brings judgment upon these offenders. Not only have they rejected his invitation, but they also murdered his messengers.

3. (Mat_22:8-10) The third invitation.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.”

a. **As many as you find, invite to the wedding:** The king was determined that he would not have an empty banquet hall, so an invitation was given to all who would hear.

4. (Mat_22:11-14) The man without a wedding garment.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”

a. **When the king came to see the guests:** The king carefully examines his guests, to see if they all wore the garments that were customarily offered to those attending a wedding feast.

b. **A man there who did not have on a wedding garment:** The man without a robe is conspicuous by his difference. He considered his own garment good enough, and refused the covering offered by the king.

i. God wants to clothe us. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.* (Isa_61:10)

ii. Those who are trying to establish their own righteousness before God are like the man who though he could clothe himself. *For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

(Rom_10:3)

iii.

The Bride eyes not her garment,

But her dear Bridegroom’s face;

I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace

Not at the crown He giveth, but on His pierced hand:

The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land

(from hymn by A. R. Cousins)

c. **Cast him into outer darkness:** The man who rejected the king's covering is assigned a horrible fate.

The same terrible fate awaits those who reject God's righteousness.

5. Observations on this parable.

a. This is an accurate portrayal of God's judgment on the Jews, especially the Jewish leaders, who rejected His two invitations to accept the Messiah. Jesus brought the first invitation Himself, and the apostles brought the second invitation in the Book of Acts.

b. This parable demonstrates that the *indifferent* and the *antagonist* toward the gospel share the same fate; neither made it to the feast. Whether one chooses to *ignore* God or is openly *antagonistic* towards Him, the end result is the same.

c. The bad were invited to the feast, but they did not remain bad. They were made fit for the feast by the king's garments.

d. This parable, as pointed and direct as it was, had no effect on the sin-hardened hearts of these religious leaders.

B. Question from the Pharisees.

1. (Mat_22:15-17) After a flattering introduction, the Pharisees ask Jesus a problematic question.

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in *His* talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

a. **Plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk:**

Here the Pharisees and the Herodians work together. This is a testimony to their great hatred of Jesus, because they are willing to put aside their own differences for the sake of uniting against Jesus.

b. **Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?** Jesus' dilemma with this question is simple. If He said that taxes *should* be paid, He could be accused of denying the sovereignty of God over Israel (making Himself an enemy of the Jews). If He said that taxes *should not* be paid, He declared Himself an enemy of Rome.

2. (Mat_22:18-22) Jesus' reply: render to Caesar what is his, but give to God what belongs to God.

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." When they had heard *these words*, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

a. **Whose image and inscription is this:** Again, with His wise answer, Jesus shows that He is in complete control. He rebuked the wickedness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Herodians.

b. **Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's:** Jesus affirmed that the government makes legitimate requests of us. We are responsible to God in all things, but we must be obedient to the powers that be in things civil and national.

c. **And to God the things that are God's:** Everyone has the image of God impressed upon them. This means that we belong to God - not to Caesar, or not even to ourselves.

d. Had the Jews rendered unto God His due, they would have never had to render *anything* to Caesar. In New Testament times, they would never had the occupying oppression of

the Roman Empire if they had been obedient to their covenant with God.

C. Question from the Sadducees.

1. (Mat_22:23-28) The Sadducees, who were intellectual materialists, ask a difficult question, attempting to ridicule the idea of the resurrection.

The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.

Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

a. **The Sadducees, who say there is not resurrection:**

The Sadducees were the ancient equivalent to modern liberal theologians. They were anti-supernaturalists, only accepting the first five books (The Torah) as authentic - and disregarding the Torah when it pleased them to do so.

b. **Now there were with us seven brothers:** The Sadducees then ask Jesus a hypothetical - and ridiculous - question, hoping to show the idea of the resurrection is nonsense. Based on the law of levirate marriage described in Deu_25:5-10, if a married man died childless, it was his brother's responsibility to impregnate his brother's widow and account the child as the deceased husband's descendant. The Pharisees imagined elaborate circumstances that raised the question, **"Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? "**

2. (Mat_22:29) Jesus' reply to the educated men of His day: you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God.

Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

a. **Not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God:** We can be highly educated, yet not know the most important things in the world - God's Word and God's power.

3. (Mat_22:30-33) Jesus answers the question.

"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And when the multitudes heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching.

a. **In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage:** First, Jesus reminds them that life in the resurrection life is quite different from this life. It does not merely continue this world and its arrangements, but it is life of a completely different order.

i. We can't be completely certain what life in glory beyond will be like, but we can know with certainty that no one will be disappointed with the arrangements.

b. **But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God:** Then, Jesus demonstrates the reality of the resurrection using only the Torah - the only books the Sadducees would accept. If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not live on in resurrection, then God would say that *He was the God of Abraham*, instead of **I am the God of Abraham**.

4. (Mat_22:34-40) Question from a lawyer among the Pharisees: which is the greatest commandment?

But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question*, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is

the first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

a. **Asked Him a question, testing Him:** In asking Jesus to choose one **great commandment**, they tried to make Jesus show neglect for another area of the law. Instead of promoting one command over another, Jesus defines the law in its essence: **love the Lord** with everything you have and **love your neighbor** as yourself.

i. It is clear enough what it means to **love the Lord** with all we are, though it is exceeding difficult to do. But there has been much confusion about what it means to love **your neighbor as yourself**. This doesn't mean that we must love ourselves before we can love anyone else; it means that in the same way we take care of ourselves and are concerned about our own interests, we should take care and have concern for the interests of others.

b. **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets:** These are still the great commandments; these are the laws that God wants to make real in our lives.

D. Jesus asks a question of His opponents.

1. (Mat_22:41-42 a) The all-important question.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"

a. **What do you think about the Christ?** Jesus still asks this question today. When asked, "Who is the Messiah?" the answer determines our eternal destiny

2. (Mat_22:42 b) The Pharisees identify the lineage of the Messiah.

They said to Him, "*The Son of David.*"

3. (Mat_22:43-45) Jesus is not only David's Son; He is David's Lord!

He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right

hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”“? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”

a. **How then does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord” :** The Pharisees were partially right in saying that the Messiah is the Son of David. But they didn’t have a complete understanding of who the Messiah is.

He is not only David’s Son (a reference to His humanity), but He is also David’s **Lord** (a reference to the deity of Jesus, the Messiah).

b. This is the idea communicated in Rev_22:16 : *I am the root and the offspring of David*, and Rom_1:4, which shows Jesus as both the *Son of David* and the *Son of God*. We must not neglect either facet of Jesus’

person. He is truly man and truly God, and can only be our Savior if He is both.

c. **If David then calls Him “Lord,” how is He his Son?**

Jesus’ brilliantly simple explanation of the Scriptures puts the Pharisees on the defensive. They did not want to admit that the Messiah was also the Lord God, but Jesus shows this is true from the Scriptures.

4. (Mat_22:46) Jesus’ enemies in retreat.

And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

a. **No one was able to answer Him a word:** Logic and rhetoric have proved to be of no help in destroying Jesus. Now His enemies will resort to treachery and violence.

(Mat 22:2) "The kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.

(Mat 22:3) He sent his slaves² to summon those who had been invited to the banquet, but they would not come.

(Mat 22:4) Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Look! The feast I have prepared for you is ready.³ My oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet." '

(Mat 22:5) But they were indifferent and went away, one to his farm, another to his business.

(Mat 22:6) The⁴ rest seized his slaves, insolently mistreated them, and killed them.

(Mat 22:7) The⁵ king was furious! He sent his soldiers, and they put those murderers to death⁶ and set their city⁷ on fire.

(Mat 22:8) Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but the ones who had been invited were not worthy.'

(Mat 22:9) So go into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.'

(Mat 22:10) And those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all they found, both bad and good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

(Mat 22:11) But when the king came in to see the wedding guests, he saw a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.

(Mat 22:12) And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' But he had nothing to say.⁸

(Mat 22:13) Then the king said to his attendants, 'Tie him up hand and foot and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!'

(Mat 22:14) For many are called, but few are chosen."

(Mat 22:15) ***Paying Taxes to Caesar***

Then the Pharisees⁹ went out and planned together to entrap him with his own words.¹⁰

(Mat 22:16) They sent to him their disciples along with the Herodians,¹¹ saying, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.¹² You do not court anyone's favor because you show no partiality.¹³

(Mat 22:17) Tell us then, what do you think? Is it right¹⁴ to pay taxes¹⁵ to Caesar¹⁶ or not?"

(Mat 22:18) But Jesus realized their evil intentions and said, "Hypocrites! Why are you testing me?"

(Mat 22:19) Show me the coin used for the tax." So¹⁷ they brought him a denarius.¹⁸

(Mat 22:20) Jesus¹⁹ said to them, "Whose image²⁰ is this, and whose inscription?"

(Mat 22:21) They replied,²¹ "Caesar's." He said to them,²² "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."²³

(Mat 22:22) Now when they heard this they were stunned,²⁴ and they left him and went away.

(Mat 22:23) ***Marriage and the Resurrection***

The same day Sadducees²⁵ (who say there is no resurrection)²⁶ came to him and asked him,²⁷

(Mat 22:24) "Teacher, Moses said, ' ***If a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and father***

children ²⁸ ***for his brother.***'²⁹

(Mat 22:25) Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children he left his wife to his brother.

(Mat 22:26) The second did the same, and the third, down to the seventh.

(Mat 22:27) Last³⁰ of all, the woman died.

(Mat 22:28) In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her."³¹

(Mat 22:29) Jesus³² answered them, "You are deceived,³³ because you don't know the scriptures or the power of God.

(Mat 22:30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels³⁴ in heaven.

(Mat 22:31) Now as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God,³⁵

(Mat 22:32) ' ***I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob***'?³⁶ He is not the God of the dead but of the living!"³⁷

(Mat 22:33) When the crowds heard this, they were amazed at his teaching.

(Mat 22:34) ***The Greatest Commandment***

Now when the Pharisees³⁸ heard that he had silenced the Sadducees,³⁹ they assembled together.⁴⁰

(Mat 22:35) And one of them, an expert in religious law,⁴¹ asked him a question to test⁴² him: (Mat 22:36) "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"⁴³

(Mat 22:37) Jesus⁴⁴ said to him, " ' ***Love*** ⁴⁵ ***the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.***'⁴⁶

(Mat 22:38) This is the first and greatest⁴⁷ commandment.

(Mat 22:39) The second is like it: ' ***Love your neighbor as yourself.***'⁴⁸

(Mat 22:40) All the law and the prophets depend⁴⁹ on these two commandments."

(Mat 22:41) ***The Messiah: David's Son and Lord***

While⁵⁰ the Pharisees⁵¹ were assembled, Jesus asked them a question:⁵²

(Mat 22:42) "What do you think about the Christ?⁵³ Whose son is he?" They said, "The son of David."⁵⁴

(Mat 22:43) He said to them, "How then does David by the Spirit call him 'Lord,' saying, (Mat 22:44) ' ***The Lord said to my lord,*** ⁵⁵

" Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet" ' ?⁵⁶

(Mat 22:45) If David then calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"⁵⁷

(Mat 22:46) No one⁵⁸ was able to answer him a word, and from that day on no one dared to question him any longer.

(Mat 23:1) ***Seven Woes***

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,
(Guzik)

Mat 23:1-39

MATTHEW 23 - WOES TO THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES

A. Jesus rebukes the scribes and the Pharisees.

1. (Mat_23:1-4) They lay oppressive burdens on others.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers."

a. **Whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do:** Jesus says respect is due to the scribes and Pharisees - not because of their conduct, but because they **sit in Moses' seat**. They hold an office of authority, ordained by God.

b. **They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders:** The first accusation against these religious leaders could apply to many religious leaders today. Many still make Christianity a set of burdensome rules to follow.

i. The early church rejected this legalism when it insisted that obedience to the Mosaic Law is not a foundation for the Christian life. Peter told the legalists in Act_15:10 : "*Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*"

c. **Heavy burdens:** The burden of the religious leaders contrasts sharply to Jesus' burden. His burden is light, and His yoke is easy (Mat_11:30).

2. (Mat_23:5-10) They do their works to be seen of others, and live for the praise of men.

“But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.”

a. **All their works they do to be seen by men:** The religious leaders were guilty of advertising their righteousness. Both the **phylacteries** (small leather boxes with tiny scrolls with scriptures on them, tied to the arm and head with leather straps) and the **borders of their garments** were worn in supposed conformity to the Mosaic Law (Deu_11:18, Num_15:38-40).

b. **They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments:** Naturally, like every person in the flesh, the religious leaders figured that *broader* phylacteries and *larger* borders on their garments showed them to be more spiritual. There is virtually no end to the way that man’s depravity cannot pervert God’s commands.

c. **They love the best places . . . greetings in the marketplaces:** Not content to display their “spirituality,” the religious leaders loved it when people *admired* their “spirituality.” They coveted the seats of honor at banquets and at the synagogue, and they loved the honoring titles such as **Rabbi** and **father**.

3. (Mat_23:11-12) The way of Jesus: service and humility.

“But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

a. **He who is greatest among you shall be your servant:** In the flesh, we determine greatness by how many

people serve and honor us. In Jesus, we determine greatness by how we serve and honor others.

i. Since Jesus truly was the **greatest among** them, He spoke of Himself as a **servant**.

Unfortunately, for the most part the church has imitated the style of the scribes and Pharisees more than the style of Jesus.

b. **Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted:** This promise is absolutely true, but sometimes needs the measure of eternity to make itself known.

B. The eight woes.

These woes stand in contrast to the eight beatitudes of Mat_5:3-11. Jesus speaks harshly here, but this is not the language of personal irritation, but of divine warning and condemnation.

1. (Mat_23:13) Woe to those who shut up the kingdom.

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

a. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** Literally, the word “**hypocrites**” refers to an actor, someone playing a part. Jesus exposes the corruption covered by the pretty religious exterior.

b. **You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men:** The religious leaders kept people from the kingdom by obscuring God’s word with human traditions, and by denying Jesus. Empty religion and legalism do the same thing today.

c. **You neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in:** It is bad for someone to not enter into heaven themselves, but it is far worse to prevent another from going in (Mat_18:6).

3. (Mat_23:14) The religious leaders steal from the vulnerable.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers.

Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”

a. **You devour widows’ houses:** They stole **widows’ houses** in the name of good business and “stewardship”, and made **long prayers** for the sake of big donations.

b. **Therefore you will receive greater condemnation:** Jesus reminds us of the concept of **greater condemnation**; no one will have it good in Hell, but we can trust that some will have it worse than others will.

4. (Mat_23:15) The religious leaders led their converts on the wrong path.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

a. **You travel land and sea to win one proselyte:** Zeal in evangelism does not prove that a person is right with God. These religious leaders went to great lengths in their evangelism, but they brought people to darkness, not light.

i. Paul had the same idea in Rom_10:2, where he observed that some of the Jewish people of his day had *a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*.

b. **When he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves:** In this respect, the religious leaders were similar to Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses today. They were courageous and energetic messengers, but with a false message.

5. (Mat_23:16-22) The religious leaders made false and deceptive oaths.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it*.’ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*'

Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it."

a. **Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing:** Out of obedience to God's word, they would not swear by the name of God (Exo_20:7). But they constructed an elaborate system of oaths - some of which were binding and some were not - a way of making a promise while keeping your fingers crossed.

b. **He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it:** Jesus reminds us that every oath is binding, and God holds the oath-maker to account, even if they excuse themselves.

6. (Mat_23:23-24) The religious leaders are obsessed with trivialities, and ignoring the weighty matters.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"

a. **You pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin:** Their tithing was meticulous and noteworthy; but not if it only soothed the guilt of their neglect of the **weightier matters of the law**.

i. Tragically, the church is often distracted with trivialities while the world goes to hell.

b. **Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel:** Jesus illustrates their folly with a humorous picture of a **gnat** which could not be swallowed because it was not

bled properly in accord with kosher regulations, and swallowing a whole **camel** instead.

7. (Mat_23:25-26) The religious leaders are impure both inside and out.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

a. **You cleanse the outside of the cup:** Many are satisfied with a superficial cleansing, and the *appearance* of righteousness before others. God looks for a true cleansing, so we can be clean before God *and* man.

8. (Mat_23:27-28) The religious leaders have the appearance of good, but without spiritual life in the inner man.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

a. **You are like whitewashed tombs:** Before Passover, it was the custom of the Jews of that time to whitewash the tombs in the city of Jerusalem so that no one would touch one accidentally, thus making themselves unclean. Jesus says these religious leaders are like these **whitewashed tombs** - pretty on the outside, but dead on the inside.

b. **You also outwardly appear righteous to men:** God is never fooled by what we show on the outside.

He sees what we actually are, not what we appear to be to other men.

9. (Mat_23:29-36) The religious leaders honor dead prophets, but murder the living prophets.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments

of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt*. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation."

a. **You build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous:** They professed to venerate the dead, but they rejected the living. In doing so, they show that they really are the children of those who murdered the prophets in the days of old (**you are sons of those who murdered the prophets**).

i. We express the same thought when we think. "I wouldn't have denied Jesus like the other disciples did."

b. **Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt:** Jesus prophesies about how these leaders will complete the rejection of the prophets their fathers started by persecuting His disciples, whom He will send to them.

c. **Serpents, brood of vipers:** This phrase has the idea of "family of the devil." These religious leaders took an unmerited pride in their heritage, which was really of the devil, not of Abraham.

i. This is all pretty tough stuff. Why did Jesus utter such scathing rebukes? Because He loved these men. These men were the farthest from God and they needed to be warned of coming judgment. What Jesus really wanted was their repentance, not their judgment.

1. (Mat_23:37-39) Jesus laments for Jerusalem.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

a. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem:** Luk_19:41 tells us that Jesus wept as He looked over the city of Jerusalem, contemplated its coming judgment, and said these words. Jesus wanted to protect them from the terrible judgment that will follow their rejection of Him.

i. It is written that Jesus wept two times: here, at the pain of knowing what would befall those who reject Him, and at Lazarus’ tomb, weeping at the power and pain of death.

i. This heartfelt cry is another way to see that Jesus didn’t hate these men He rebuked so strongly. His heart broke for them. When we sin, God does not hate us, He genuinely weeps for us, knowing that in every way, our sin and rebellion only destroys our life.

iii. May we share God’s broken heart for a lost humanity!

b. **You shall see Me no more till you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

Jesus here reveals something of the conditions surrounding His Second Coming. When Jesus comes again, the Jewish people will welcome Him as the Messiah saying, **blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.**

i. It will take a great deal to bring Israel to that point, but God will do it, and Israel will welcome Jesus back - even as Paul said in Rom_11:26 : *And so all Israel will be saved.*

(Mat 23:2) "The¹ experts in the law² and the Pharisees³ sit on Moses's seat.

(Mat 23:3) Therefore pay attention to what they tell you and do it. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they teach.⁴

(Mat 23:4) They⁵ tie up heavy loads, hard to carry, and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing even to lift a finger to move them.

(Mat 23:5) They⁶ do all their deeds to be seen by people, for they make their phylacteries⁷ wide and their tassels⁸ long.

(Mat 23:6) They⁹ love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues¹⁰

(Mat 23:7) and elaborate greetings¹¹ in the marketplaces, and to have people call them 'Rabbi.'

(Mat 23:8) But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher and you are all brothers.

(Mat 23:9) And call no one your 'father' on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.

(Mat 23:10) Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one teacher, the Christ.¹²

(Mat 23:11) The¹³ greatest among you will be your servant.

(Mat 23:12) And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

(Mat 23:13) "But woe to you, experts in the law¹⁴ and you Pharisees, hypocrites!¹⁵ You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven!¹⁶ For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in.¹⁷

(Mat 23:14) *(TEXT OMITTED)*

(Mat 23:15) "Woe to you, experts in the law¹⁸ and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You cross land and sea to make one convert,¹⁹ and when you get one,²⁰ you make him twice as much a child of hell²¹ as yourselves!

(Mat 23:16) "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple is bound by nothing.²² But whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.'

(Mat 23:17) Blind fools! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

(Mat 23:18) And, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing.²³ But if anyone swears by the gift on it he is bound by the oath.'

(Mat 23:19) You are blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

(Mat 23:20) So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

(Mat 23:21) And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and the one who dwells in it.

(Mat 23:22) And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and the one who sits on it.

(Mat 23:23) "Woe to you, experts in the law²⁴ and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth²⁵ of mint, dill, and cumin,²⁶ yet you neglect what is more important in the law — justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You²⁷ should have done these things without neglecting the others.

(Mat 23:24) Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel!²⁸

(Mat 23:25) "Woe to you, experts in the law²⁹ and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

(Mat 23:26) Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup,³⁰ so that the outside may become clean too!

(Mat 23:27) "Woe to you, experts in the law³¹ and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean.³²

(Mat 23:28) In the same way, on the outside you look righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

(Mat 23:29) "Woe to you, experts in the law³³ and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You³⁴ build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves³⁵ of the righteous.

(Mat 23:30) And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors,³⁶ we would not have participated with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

(Mat 23:31) By saying this you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the

prophets.

(Mat 23:32) Fill up then the measure of your ancestors!

(Mat 23:33) You snakes, you offspring of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?³⁷

(Mat 23:34) "For this reason I³⁸ am sending you prophets and wise men and experts in the law,³⁹ some of whom you will kill and crucify,⁴⁰ and some you will flog⁴¹ in your synagogues⁴² and pursue from town to town, (Mat 23:35) so that on you will come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah,⁴³ whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

(Mat 23:36) I tell you the truth,⁴⁴ this generation will be held responsible for all these things!⁴⁵

(Mat 23:37) ***Judgment on Israel***

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,⁴⁶ you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you!⁴⁷ How often I have longed⁴⁸ to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but⁴⁹ you would have none of it!⁵⁰

(Mat 23:38) Look, your house is left to you desolate!

(Mat 23:39) For I tell you, you will not see me from now until you say, ' ***Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*** '

"⁵¹

(Mat 24:1) ***The Destruction of the Temple***

Now¹ as Jesus was going out of the temple courts and walking away, his disciples came to show him the temple buildings.²

(Guzik)

Mat 24:1-51

MATTHEW 24 - JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE

A. The destruction of the temple and its implications.

1. (Mat_24:1-2) Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple.

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

a. His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple: This temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezr_6:15), but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years - so much so, that it was customary to swear by the temple (Mat_23:16), and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy (Act_6:13).

i. After Herod's work, the temple was huge - nearly 500 yards long and 400 yards wide.

Herod's rebuilding work started in 19 b.c., and was only completed in 63 a.d., taking more than eighty years. The temple was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.

ii. But the temple wasn't just big, it was also beautiful. The Jewish historian Josephus says that the temple was covered on the outside with gold plates, that were so brilliant that when the sun shone on them, it was blinding to look at. Where there was no gold, there were blocks of marble of such a pure white that strangers, from a distance, thought there was snow on the temple.

c. Not one stone shall be left here upon another: Some 40 years after Jesus said this, there was a widespread Jewish revolution against the Romans in Palestine, and they enjoyed many early successes. But ultimately, Rome crushed the rebels. In 70 a.d. Jerusalem was leveled, including the temple - just as Jesus said.

i. It is said that at the fall of Jerusalem, the last surviving Jews of the city fled to the temple, because it was the strongest, most secure building in the city. Roman soldiers surrounded it, and one drunken soldier started a fire that soon engulfed the whole building. Ornate gold detail work in

the roof melted down in the cracks between the stone walls of the temple, and to retrieve the gold, the Roman commander ordered that the temple be dismantled stone by stone. The destruction was so complete that today they have true difficulty learning exactly where the temple was.

d. **That shall not be thrown down:** This prophecy was fulfilled literally. There was a real temple, and it was really destroyed. The literal fulfillment of this prophecy establishes the tone for the rest of the prophecies in the chapter. We should expect a literal fulfillment for these as well.

2. (Mat_24:3) Jesus' prediction brings up two questions.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

a. **When will these things be?** Jesus said the temple would be completely destroyed. It was logical that the disciples wanted to know when it would happen.

i. Matthew does not record Jesus' answer to this first question, but Luke does in Luk_21:8-23.

b. **And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?** The disciples may have thought they asked only one question. In their minds, the destruction of the temple and the **end of the age** might have been tied together. But really, they asked two questions, and this second question is answered in the remainder of the chapter.

i. It may also be that this second question was asked as they remembered the events surrounding the last temple's destruction: the temple was destroyed in the context of national judgment and exile.

3. As Jesus answers this important second question, He will make many specific comments and predictions about the end times. These predictions have been the source of tremendous disagreement among Christians who have tried

to understand them. Why didn't Jesus simply say it so clearly that there was no possibility anyone could misunderstand Him?

a. One reason why prophecy may seem "vague" is because God wants every age to have reasons to be ready for Jesus' return. We should not think of Jesus' return as an event far off on a time line, but something we have been running parallel with since the day of Pentecost.

b. Others have suggested that God's intention was to keep the future somewhat vague and clouded to confound the Devil, even as the resurrection of the Messiah was vague in the Old Testament.

c. Though some prophetic interpretations are different, we are sure of this: *He is coming again*, and we must be ready.

B. The flow of history until Jesus' return.

1. (Mat_24:4-8) Jesus describes general world conditions during the period between His Ascension and the time immediately preceding His second coming.

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows."

a. **Take heed that no one deceives you:** From the outset, Jesus warns the disciples that many will be deceived as they anticipate His return. There have been times in the history of the church when rash predictions were made and relied on, and resulted in tremendous disappointment, disillusionment, and falling away.

b. **See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet:** The kind of things Jesus mentions in this section are *not* the things that

specific signs of the end. Things like false messiahs, **wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes** have certainly marked man's history since the time of Jesus' Ascension - but were not specific signs of the end. In effect, Jesus says "Catastrophes will happen, but these will not signal the end."

i. In the midst of any great war or any great famine or any great earthquake, it is natural to believe that the world is coming to an end. But Jesus says there is a far more specific sign we should look for.

c. **All these are the beginning of sorrows:** Though none of those events are the specific sign of the end of the age, collectively they *are* a sign. When Jesus described these calamities as **the beginning of sorrows** He literally called them *the beginning of labor pains*. Just as is true with labor pains, we should expect that the things mentioned - **wars, famines, earthquakes**, and so on - would become *more frequent* and *more intense* before the return of Jesus.

2. (Mat_24:9-14) Jesus describes what His disciples must expect during the time between His Ascension and Second Coming.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

a. **They will deliver you to tribulation and kill you:** In the period after Jesus ascends to heaven and before He comes again, His disciples should expect to be persecuted. But this is not the specific sign of His return.

b. **False prophets will arise and deceive many:** In the period after Jesus ascends to heaven and before He comes

again, the disciples of Jesus will see many false prophets, and their success. But this is not the specific sign of His return.

c. **Lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold:** In the period after Jesus ascends to heaven and before He comes again, His disciples should expect to see society become worse and worse. But this is not the specific sign of His return.

d. **This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come:** But Jesus also promised that before the end, the gospel will go out to the whole world. The persecution, false prophets, and general downgrade of society will not prevent the spread of the gospel.

i. The church is to take this seriously as their duty. However, God assures that it *will* happen: *I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue and people - saying with a loud voice. "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come."*

(Rev_14:6-7)

C. Jesus describes the sign of His coming and the end of the age.

1. (Mat_24:15) The sign: the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel.

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

a. **When you see the "abomination of desolation" :** Essentially, the **abomination of desolation** speaks of the ultimate desecration of a Jewish temple, the establishment of an idolatrous image in the **holy place** itself, which will inevitably result in the judgment of God. It is the **abomination** that brings desolation.

i. In the vocabulary of Judaism of that time, an **abomination** was an especially offensive form of idolatry. Jesus describes a gross form of idolatry, **standing in the holy place**, that will usher in great destruction (**desolation**).

b. **Standing in the holy place**: This means that the **abomination of desolation** takes place in the Jewish temple. This is the only plain meaning of the phrase **holy place**. Some believe it happened in a *prior* Jewish temple, before it was destroyed in 70 a.d. Others - more properly - believe it *will happen* in the **holy place** of a rebuilt temple.

i. For centuries, there was only a small Jewish presence in Judea and Jerusalem. Their presence in the region was definite, and continuous, but small. It is unthinkable that this weak Jewish presence could rebuild a temple. Therefore the fulfillment of this prophecy was highly unlikely until Israel was regathered as a nation in 1948. The restoration of a nation that the world had not seen for some 2,000 years is a remarkable event in the fulfillment and future fulfillment of prophecy.

c. **As spoken of by Daniel the prophet**: The mention of the **abomination of desolation** is taken from the book of Daniel. *They shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation* (Dan_11:31). This describes a complete desecration of the temple, prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanies in the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

i. Paul elaborates on the future fulfillment of this in 2Th_2:3-4 : *That day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

ii. Dan_12:11 gives additional insight: *And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination*

of desolation is set up, there shall be 1,290 days (until the end).

When this sign is set up, the end may be determined - there will be almost three and one-half years to go.

d. **Whoever reads, let him understand:** In a sense, Jesus tells us nothing new here. He simply calls us back to what was prophesied in Daniel. The comment **whoever reads, let him understand** could have been said by Jesus Himself, instead of inserted by Matthew.

2. (Mat_24:16-20) Jesus warns what should be done when the abomination of desolation appears: flee immediately.

"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath."

a. **Then let those who are in Judea flee:** These are warning specifically addressed to Israelites. **Judea, housetops,** and **Sabbath** all speak to a Jewish environment.

b. This is because at the appearance of the abomination of desolation, the desolation will first be poured out at Judea, and because the church will not be a factor at this time, having already been caught up to meet Jesus in the air (1Th_4:16-17).

i. Because Jesus tells His disciples about the abomination of desolation (which is set up by the antichrist in the middle of the Great Tribulation) and warns them of this coming destruction in the Great Tribulation, some Christians believe that all Christians *will go through* the Great Tribulation. To them, it seems evident. Why would Jesus say these things to His disciples if His disciples would not experience them?

ii. The answer is simple. We know from this passage, and many other Scriptural passages, that God will remove His church before the fury of the Great Tribulation, catching

them away to meet Jesus in the air (1Th_4:16-17). Yet this information is valuable for the followers of Jesus, so we can understand His plan for the future. This information is valuable for those who will *become* His disciples in the Great Tribulation after the church is gone.

iii. We do well to remember that the disciples who heard Jesus say these words saw none of these things. Yet, it was still good for them to hear it. Even if Christians will not go into the Great Tribulation, it is good for them - and those who will become Christian in the tribulation - to know what will happen in it. Jesus speaks to all the ages here.

3. (Mat_24:21-28) Coming on the heels of the abomination of desolation: **great tribulation**.

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.

Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*.

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

a. **Great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time:** Jesus said that this will be the most awful time in all of human history. When we think of the terrible wars, plagues, famines, and genocide history has seen, this is a terribly sobering statement. When God pours out His wrath on a God rejecting world, it will be truly **great tribulation**.

b. **Look, here is the Christ:** No one should be deceived about the nature of Jesus' coming. It will not be secret or private, but as plain as **lightning** that **flashes** across the sky. But in the midst of such tribulation, there will be a temptation to look for false messiahs (**false christs and false prophets will rise**).

c. **For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together:** This is a difficult statement. It was probably a figure of speech with the idea, "when judgment is ripe, it will surely come."

4. (Mat_24:29-31) On the heels of great tribulation: the return of Jesus Christ.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

a. **The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light:** Several prophetic passages describe the cosmic disturbances that will precede and surround the return of Jesus (Joe_2:10, Rev_6:12-14, Isa_34:4).

b. Cryptically, Jesus says that **the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven**. It is difficult to say exactly what this sign is, since this seems to precede His return as described in Rev_19:11. Perhaps this sign is somehow related to the incredible cosmic disturbances that will precede this.

c. **They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory:** This is the fulfillment of the end, indicated by the sign of *the*

abomination of desolation. Since this has not happened yet, neither has the abomination of desolation.

5. (Mat_24:32-35) Jesus speaks more regarding the timing of these events.

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

a. **Learn this parable from the fig tree:** The **fig tree** has a regular pattern. The leaves appear, and then summer follows. When you see the leaves, you know summer is near.

i. The **fig tree** was a common fruit tree in Israel. It is mentioned many times in the Old Testament, especially as a description of the abundance of the land. Sometimes figs or fig trees are also used as symbols or pictures. In passages like Jer_24:1-10 and Hos_9:10, figs or fig trees are used as an representation of Israel.

ii. However, most Old Testament references to the **fig tree** use it as simply an example of agricultural blessing. It seems that Jesus’ reference here is not so much on the “figness” of the fig tree, but on the way that the fig tree follows reliable growth cycles related to the seasons. This is especially evident compared when this passage is compared with

Luk_21:29-31 : *Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.*

b. **So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at the doors!** Jesus assures that when these signs appear as He as foretold (the abomination of desolation, followed by great tribulation, followed by signs in the heavens), His return to the earth *will* follow. When a fig tree buds, there is an inevitable result - summer is near, and

fruit is coming. In the same way, when these signs are seen, the coming of Jesus in glory, with His church, to this world will inevitably follow.

i. Really, it was just as Daniel prophesied in Dan_12:11. The end *will come* 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation. Jesus assures that the agonies of the Great Tribulation will not continue indefinitely; they will have an end.

c. **Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place:** What **generation** does Jesus mean?

i. It cannot be the generation of the disciples, because they never saw Jesus return in glory as described in Mat_24:30. It is undoubtedly the generation that sees these signs. These events and Jesus' return won't be on some 1,000-year timetable, but will happen in succession.

d. Up to this point, Jesus has given an important outline for end-times events.

o There will arise catastrophes and persecutions, but those in themselves are not the sign of the end.

o There will arise a pivotal sign: the abomination of desolation.

o When the abomination of desolation appears, there are warnings to Israel to flee after the abomination.

o On the heels of the abomination of desolation comes great tribulation, and cosmic disturbances.

o In culmination, Jesus Christ will return in glory to the earth.

D. More on His coming, but from a different approach.

1. (Mat_24:36) Jesus says that the day and hour of His return is unknowable by men, and even unknowable by angels.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

a. **Of that day and hour no one knows:** Here, Jesus refers back to the original question of Mat_24:3

(*what will be the sign of Your coming?*). His answer is somewhat unexpected - saying **of that day and hour no**

one knows.

b. Based on what He had told us about the abomination of desolation, we might have expected that the exact day and hour *could* be known. After all, Daniel set the day of Jesus' return as being exactly 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation (Dan_12:11).

i. In this, there is a dilemma. How can the day of Jesus' coming be both completely unknown, and at the same time be known to the day according to Dan_12:11?

2. (Mat_24:37-39) Jesus says that His coming will be when the world is as it was in **the days of Noah**.

"But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

a. **As the days of Noah were:** Jesus explained what He meant by **the days of Noah**. It means life is centered around the normal things: **eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage**. In other words, life will be business as usual; reprobate perhaps, but usual.

i. We should also remember that the days of Noah were also marked by violence and demonic oppression (Gen_6:1-5).

b. **And did not know until the flood came and took them all away:** Though the people in the days of Noah were warned, judgment eventually came. To those who had ignored the warnings, it came suddenly and unexpectedly.

i. In this, there is a dilemma. How can Jesus come to a "business as usual" world, and a world experiencing the worst calamities ever seen on earth?

3. (Mat_24:40-44) Jesus cautions His disciples to be ready for an unexpected coming.

"Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not

know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

a. **Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left:** Jesus here points to curious disappearances; to a catching away of some at the coming of the Son of Man (as also described in 1Th_4:16-17).

b. **Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming:** Since the day and hour of this coming are unknowable, Jesus’ followers must be on constant guard for His coming.

i. Here again is the Second Coming dilemma.

o Is it at an unexpected hour or is it positively predicted?

o Is it business as usual or worldwide cataclysm?

o Is it meeting Him in the air (1Th_4:16-17) or is He coming with the saints (Zec_14:5)?

ii. The dilemma is resolved by seeing that there are actually “two” second comings. One is in the air, for the church - commonly known as the *rapture*. The other is to the world, coming with the church, commonly known as the Second Coming of Jesus. The “contradictions” in Matthew 24 (and the much of the rest of prophecy) are often solved by seeing there are really references to “two” returns of Jesus.

c. **Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect:** We must not escape the emphasis. We must be ready, because His coming for us is without warning. Jesus will now tell a few parables to drive home this point.

E. Parable of the two servants.

1. (Mat_24:45-47) The faithful servant.

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he

comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.”

a. **Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing:** Jesus tells us that we must carry on with diligence while the Lord is gone. We must be that **faithful and wise servant** who takes care of his master’s business while the master is away.

b. **Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods:** Jesus also promises that we will be rewarded for our diligence. The servants serve the master, but the master knows how to take care of and reward the servants.

2. (Mat_24:48-51) The evil servant.

“But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

a. **If that evil servant says in his heart, “My master is delaying his coming”** : Jesus warns us of the attitude which says, “**my master is delaying his coming.**” We must live in constant anticipation of Jesus’ return, and that means being about our business for Him *now*.

i. The most dangerous lie is not “There is no God”, not “there is no hell”; but the most dangerous lie of Satan is “there is no hurry.” It is not small thing to say “Jesus is not coming today, or for several years” because your system of prophecy demands it. We need to be ready for the *immanent return* of Jesus Christ.

b. **Begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards:** The evil servant, who was not ready for the master’s return, sinned in at least three ways.

- o He was not about the business that the master left for him.
- o He fought with and mistreated **his fellow servants**.

o He gave himself to the pleasures of the world instead of serving his master.

i. Can the same be said of many Christians today? Are you ready for the return of your master?

c. **Cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites:** The faithful and wise servant was rewarded, but so is the evil servant. He is “rewarded” for His wickedness, and he has the **portion with the hypocrites** he deserved.

(Mat 24:2) And he said to them,³ "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth,⁴ not one stone will be left on another.⁵ All will be torn down!"⁶

(Mat 24:3) ***Signs of the End of the Age***

As⁷ he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things⁸ happen?

And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

(Mat 24:4) Jesus answered them,⁹ "Watch out¹⁰ that no one misleads you.

(Mat 24:5) For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,'¹¹ and they will mislead many.

(Mat 24:6) You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Make sure that you are not alarmed, for this must happen, but the end is still to come.¹²

(Mat 24:7) For nation will rise up in arms¹³ against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines¹⁴ and earthquakes¹⁵ in various places.

(Mat 24:8) All¹⁶ these things are the beginning of birth pains.

(Mat 24:9) ***Persecution of Disciples***

"Then they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations¹⁷ because of my name.¹⁸

(Mat 24:10) Then many will be led into sin,¹⁹ and they will betray one another and hate one another.

(Mat 24:11) And many false prophets will appear and deceive²⁰ many,

(Mat 24:12) and because lawlessness will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold.

(Mat 24:13) But the person who endures to the end will be saved.²¹

(Mat 24:14) And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all the nations,²²

and then the end will come.

(Mat 24:15) ***The Abomination of Desolation***

"So when you see *the abomination of desolation* ²³ — spoken about by Daniel the prophet — standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), (Mat 24:16) then those in Judea must flee²⁴ to the mountains.

(Mat 24:17) The one on the roof²⁵ must not come down²⁶ to take anything out of his house, (Mat 24:18) and the one in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.

(Mat 24:19) Woe²⁷ to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in those days!

(Mat 24:20) Pray²⁸ that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

(Mat 24:21) For then there will be great suffering²⁹ unlike anything that has happened³⁰ from the beginning of the world until now, or ever will happen.

(Mat 24:22) And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

(Mat 24:23) Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!'³¹ or 'There he is!' do not believe him.

(Mat 24:24) For false messiahs³² and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

(Mat 24:25) Remember,³³ I have told you ahead of time.

(Mat 24:26) So then, if someone³⁴ says to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,'³⁵ do not go out, or 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe him.

(Mat 24:27) For just like the lightning³⁶ comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be.

(Mat 24:28) Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures³⁷ will gather.³⁸

(Mat 24:29) ***The Arrival of the Son of Man***

"Immediately³⁹ after the suffering⁴⁰ of those days, *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.*⁴¹

(Mat 24:30) Then⁴² the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven,⁴³ and⁴⁴ all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They⁴⁵ will see *the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven* ⁴⁶ with power and great glory.

(Mat 24:31) And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven⁴⁷ to the other.

(Mat 24:32) ***The Parable of the Fig Tree***

"Learn⁴⁸ this parable from the fig tree: Whenever its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.

(Mat 24:33) So also you, when you see all these things, know⁴⁹ that he is near, right at the door.

(Mat 24:34) I tell you the truth,⁵⁰ this generation⁵¹ will not pass away until all these things take place.

(Mat 24:35) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.⁵²

(Mat 24:36) ***Be Ready!***

"But as for that day and hour no one knows it — not even the angels in heaven⁵³ — except the Father alone.

(Mat 24:37) For just like the days of Noah⁵⁴ were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be.

(Mat 24:38) For in those days before the flood, people⁵⁵ were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark.

(Mat 24:39) And they knew nothing until the flood came and took them all away.⁵⁶ It will be the same at the coming of the Son of Man.⁵⁷

(Mat 24:40) Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one left.⁵⁸

(Mat 24:41) There will be two women grinding grain with a mill;⁵⁹ one will be taken and one left.

(Mat 24:42) "Therefore stay alert, because you do not know on what day⁶⁰ your Lord will come.

(Mat 24:43) But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief⁶¹ was coming, he would have been alert and would not have let his house be broken into.

(Mat 24:44) Therefore you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.⁶²

(Mat 24:45) ***The Faithful and Wise Slave***

"Who then is the faithful and wise slave,⁶³ whom the master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves⁶⁴ their food at the proper time?

(Mat 24:46) Blessed is that slave whom the master finds at work⁶⁵ when he comes.

(Mat 24:47) I tell you the truth,⁶⁶ the master⁶⁷ will put him in charge of all his possessions.

(Mat 24:48) But if⁶⁸ that evil slave should say to himself,⁶⁹ 'My master is staying away a long time,'

(Mat 24:49) and he begins to beat his fellow slaves and to eat and drink with drunkards, (Mat 24:50) then the master

of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not foresee, (Mat 24:51) and will cut him in two,⁷⁰ and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(Mat 25:1) ***The Parable of the Ten Virgins***

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.
(Guzik)

Mat 25:1-46

MATTHEW 25 - JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE (PART 2)

A. The parable of the ten virgins.

1. (Mat_25:1) Ten virgins go out to meet a bridegroom at a wedding.

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom."

a. **Then the kingdom of heaven:** Matthew 24 ended with a parable meant to emphasize the idea of readiness for our master's return. Matthew 25 begins with another parable emphasizing the same principle.

b. **To ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom:** There were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day. The first was *engagement* - a formal agreement made by the fathers.

The second was *betrothal* - the ceremony where mutual promises are made. The third was *marriage* - approximately one year later when the bridegroom came at an unexpected time for his bride.

c. **Went to meet the bridegroom:** In this parable, the first two stages have already taken place. Now the wedding party (**the ten virgins**) await the coming of the bridegroom for his bride.

i. Why does Jesus describe **ten virgins**? Talmudic authorities affirm that there were usually ten lamps in a bridal procession.

2. (Mat_25:2-13) The young women caught unprepared are denied entry.

“Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

a. **Took their lamps:** The five foolish virgins *appeared* to be prepared for the bridegroom, because they had their lamps. But they really were not prepared, because they **took no oil with them**.

b. **Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out:** Throughout the Scriptures, **oil** is a consistent emblem of the Holy Spirit. Without **oil**, the virgins were not ready for the bridegroom.

Without the Holy Spirit, the no one is ready for the return of Jesus.

i. No one can be a true Christian without the indwelling Holy Spirit - *now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His* (Rom_8:9). These virgins had the appearance of readiness, but they lacked the critical ingredient.

ii. How can be sure of our own readiness as we ask for the Holy Spirit (Luk_11:13), and walk in the Spirit.

c. **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming:** The point of this parable is simple - *be ready*. We see that if we are not ready, no one else can help us. No one else can “give” us their “oil.”

B. The parable of the talents.

1. (Mat_25:14-15) A man gives instructions to his servants before departing on a long journey.

“For *the kingdom of heaven* is like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.”

a. **To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one:** A **talent** is not an *ability* (though this parable has application to our abilities), but a unit of *money*, worth at least \$1,200 in modern terms.

i. In the application of this parable, it is valid to see these talents as resources in our lives -
such as time, money, abilities, and authority.

b. **To each according to his own ability:** The servants were given different amounts of money according to their **ability**. One of the servants only received one talent, yet we should see that this was not an insignificant amount. Some received more, but everyone received something, and that something was not insignificant.

2. (Mat_25:16-23) The first two servants are judged.

“Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*,

good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”

a. **You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things:** The reward was the same for both servants, even though one was given **five talents** and the other was given **two talents**. Each performed the same according to the resources they received.

b. **Well done, good and faithful servant:** What did the master look for? Goodness and faithfulness in His servants. Whatever financial success these servants enjoyed came because they were **good and faithful**. The master looked first for these things, not the “bottom line.”

3. (Mat_25:24-30) The third servant is judged.

“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.’ But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

a. **I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown:** The servant who merely buried his talent tried to excuse himself because of his master's great power. In fact, he believes his master to be sort of omnipotent: **reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.**

b. **You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown:** However, the sovereignty of the master never excused the laziness of the servant. It condemned that laziness all the more.

i. Those who don't work for the Lord, or pray, or evangelize because "God is sovereign"

condemn themselves by their laziness. By their actions (or lack of action), they show that they, like the wicked servant in the parable, do not know their Master's heart at all.

ii. The charge against this servant who merely buried his talent is that he was **wicked and lazy**. We rarely see laziness as a real sin, something that must be repented of before the Lord.

c. **Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness:** Because he was **wicked and lazy**, the third servant demonstrated that he was not a true servant of his master at all. It is fitting that he (and those who show the same heart) are cast forever out of the master's presence.

d. The main point of this parable is clear: our readiness for Jesus' return is determined by our stewardship of the resources that He has given us.

i. Some think that "readiness" for Jesus' return is a rather mystical thing. It really isn't - it is a matter of being about our business for the Lord. In light of this parable, we must ask ourselves: what have we done with our knowledge? Our time? Our money? Our abilities? The sins of *omission* may ultimately be more dangerous than the sins of *commission*.

C. The judgment of the nations.

1. (Mat_25:31-46) The nations are gathered before God's throne and judged.

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

a. In this parable, the nations are judged on the basis of their treatment of **the least of these My brethren**. Are the **brethren** mentioned here Jesus’ fellow Jews, or are they Christians? Perhaps Jesus has both in view.

b. **Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?** Both those who are found guilty (the **goats**, on **the left hand**) and those who are declared innocent (the **sheep**, on **the right hand**) are surprised, wondering when they helped or neglected Jesus.

i. The answer is simple: they helped or neglected Jesus when they helped or neglected the **least** of His **brethren**.

ii. Because the righteous were not aware that they were helping Jesus when they helped the least of His brethren, it shows that their motives were pure. It was a simple response of love from the heart.

iii. **Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me:** The charge against these lost ones does not concern any flagrant violation of a moral code, but their indifferent attitude toward Jesus (and His people). Their indifference seals their doom. Throughout this chapter, the point has been emphasized: the price of indifference is too high to pay.

o We cannot afford to be indifferent towards Jesus and His return.

o We can't afford to be indifferent towards the Holy Spirit who makes us ready for the return of Jesus.

o We can't afford to be indifferent towards the resources that God gives us.

o We can't afford to be indifferent towards the needy people all around us.

o We can't afford to be indifferent towards lost humanity that will stand in judgment.

c. **Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:** Jesus clearly points out that hell was **prepared for the devil and his angels**. Men only go there because they have willingly cast their lot with the devil and his angels.

d. **Everlasting punishment . . . eternal life:** **Everlasting** and **eternal** both translate the exact same ancient Greek word. If the righteous experience **life** forever,

then we must say that the guilty experience **punishment** forever.

e. This is only one of several descriptions in the Bible of future judgment.

i. Rev_20:11-15 describe the *great white throne* judgment, where individuals are judged to see if their names are included in the Book of Life.

ii. Rom_14:10 describes the judgment seat of Christ, where Christians are judged according to their faithfulness.

iii. The judgment of the nations described in this chapter seems to be distinct. It probably describes the judgment of the nations preceding the millennial kingdom, to determine national roles in the millennium.

(Mat 25:2) Five¹ of the virgins² were foolish, and five were wise.

(Mat 25:3) When³ the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take extra⁴ olive oil⁵ with them.

(Mat 25:4) But the wise ones took flasks of olive oil with their lamps.

(Mat 25:5) When⁶ the bridegroom was delayed a long time, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

(Mat 25:6) But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is here! Come out to meet him.'⁷

(Mat 25:7) Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.

(Mat 25:8) The⁸ foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.'

(Mat 25:9) 'No,' they replied.⁹ 'There won't be enough for you and for us. Go instead to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

(Mat 25:10) But while they had gone to buy it, the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went inside with him to the wedding banquet. Then¹⁰ the door was shut.

(Mat 25:11) Later,¹¹ the other virgins came too, saying, 'Lord, lord! Let us in!'¹²

(Mat 25:12) But he replied,¹³ 'I tell you the truth,¹⁴ I do not know you!'

(Mat 25:13) Therefore stay alert, because you do not know the day or the hour.¹⁵

(Mat 25:14) ***The Parable of the Talents***

"For it is like a man going on a journey, who summoned his slaves¹⁶ and entrusted his property to them.

(Mat 25:15) To¹⁷ one he gave five talents,¹⁸ to another two, and to another one, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

(Mat 25:16) The one who had received five talents went off right away and put his money to work¹⁹ and gained five more.

(Mat 25:17) In the same way, the one who had two gained two more.

(Mat 25:18) But the one who had received one talent went out and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money in it.

(Mat 25:19) After²⁰ a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled his accounts with them.

(Mat 25:20) The²¹ one who had received the five talents came and brought five more, saying, 'Sir,²² you entrusted me with five talents.

See, I have gained five more.'

(Mat 25:21) His master answered,²³ 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

(Mat 25:22) The²⁴ one with the two talents also came and said, 'Sir, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more.'

(Mat 25:23) His master answered, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

(Mat 25:24) Then the one who had received the one talent came and said, 'Sir, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed, (Mat 25:25) so²⁵ I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'

(Mat 25:26) But his master answered,²⁶ 'Evil and lazy slave! So you knew that I harvest where I didn't sow and gather where I didn't scatter?

(Mat 25:27) Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers,²⁷ and on my return I would have received my money back with interest!²⁸

(Mat 25:28) Therefore take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten.²⁹

(Mat 25:29) For the one who has will be given more,³⁰ and he will have more than enough. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.³¹

(Mat 25:30) And throw that worthless slave into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

(Mat 25:31) ***The Judgment***

"When³² the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

(Mat 25:32) All³³ the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

(Mat 25:33) He³⁴ will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

(Mat 25:34) Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

(Mat 25:35) For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, (Mat 25:36) I was naked and you

gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

(Mat 25:37) Then the righteous will answer him,³⁵ 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

(Mat 25:38) When³⁶ did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you?

(Mat 25:39) When³⁷ did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

(Mat 25:40) And the king will answer them,³⁸ 'I tell you the truth,³⁹ just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters⁴⁰

of mine, you did it for me.'

(Mat 25:41) "Then he will say⁴¹ to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!

(Mat 25:42) For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink.

(Mat 25:43) I was a stranger and you did not receive me as a guest, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

(Mat 25:44) Then they too will answer,⁴² 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not give you whatever you needed?'

(Mat 25:45) Then he will answer them,⁴³ 'I tell you the truth,⁴⁴ just as you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for me.'

(Mat 25:46) And these will depart into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

(Mat 26:1) ***The Plot Against Jesus***

When¹ Jesus had finished saying all these things, he told his disciples,

(Guzik)

Mat 26:1-75

MATTHEW 26 - JESUS' BETRAYAL AND ARREST

A. The stage is set for the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus.

1. (Mat_26:1-2) Jesus reminds His disciples of His coming suffering and crucifixion.

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

a. **You know that after two days . . . the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified:** Perhaps after the triumphal descriptions of the coming kingdom, the disciples were reinforced in their idea that it was impossible that the Messiah should suffer. Jesus reminds them that this is not the case.

b. Again, this was something that they quickly forgot, not remembering or understanding Jesus' own predictions of His death until after His resurrection.

2. (Mat_26:3-5) The plot against Jesus.

Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*. But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

a. **Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people:** They didn't want to put Jesus to death during the Passover feast, but they will anyway. This is another subtle indication that Jesus is in control of events, when they end up killing Him on the very day that they didn't want to.

3. (Mat_26:6-13) Mary anoints Jesus.

And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the* poor." But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, "Why do you

trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial.

Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

a. **A woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil:** We know from John 12 that this was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. She made this extravagant gesture of love and devotion to Jesus.

i. Morris on the **alabaster flask**: “It had no handles and was furnished with a long neck which was broken off when the contents were needed . . . We may fairly deduce that this perfume was costly. Jewish ladies commonly wore a perfume flask suspended from a cord round the neck, and it was so much a part of them that they were allowed to wear it on the sabbath.” (Commentary on Luke)

b. **Why this waste?** The disciples criticized this lavish praise. Specifically, the critic was Judas (Joh_12:4-6). But Jesus defended her as an example of someone who simply did **a good work** for Jesus.

Her extravagant - reckless, really - giving for Jesus would be remembered as long as the gospel was preached.

c. **She did it for My burial:** Mary understood Jesus’ fate, even if Jesus’ disciples didn’t. She gave Jesus the love and attention He deserved before His great suffering. She understood more because she was in the place of greatest understanding - at the feet of Jesus.

4. (Mat_26:14-16) Judas makes a sinister deal with the Jewish leaders.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

a. **What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?** Through the centuries, many have tried to discern a deeper, perhaps even a noble motive behind Judas' betrayal of Jesus. Some thought that he intended to force Jesus to show Himself as Messiah in a dramatic way. But the Bible gives no hint of any such honorable motive.

b. **And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver:** According to the Bible, there was no noble intention in Judas' heart. His motive was simply money, and his price wasn't too high: **thirty pieces of silver** was worth perhaps \$25.

B. Jesus' "Last Supper" with His disciples.

1. (Mat_26:17-20) Preparations for the Passover: remembering redemption.

Now on the first *day* of the *Feast of the Unleavened Bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'"" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.

a. **I will keep the Passover at your house:** This must have been a very moving commemoration for Jesus. The Passover remembered the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, which was the central act of redemption in the Old Testament. Now Jesus will provide a new center of redemption.

b. **When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve:** The Jewish day began at sundown. Jesus ate the Passover and was killed on the same day according to the Jewish calendar.

2. (Mat_26:21-25) Jesus gives Judas a last opportunity to repent.

Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." And they were exceedingly

sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?” He answered and said, “He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.” Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” He said to him, “You have said it.”

a. When Jesus says that His betrayer is **he who dipped his hand with Me in the dish**, He is not pointing out one specific disciple, because they *all* **dipped** with Him. Instead, Jesus is identifying the betrayer as a *friend*, someone who ate at the same table with Him.

b. **Rabbi, is it I?** The hypocrisy of Judas is almost unbearable in this passage. For Judas to ask, “**Rabbi, is it I?**” while knowing he has already arranged the arrest of Jesus is the epitome of treachery.

c. **You have said it:** Jesus did not say this to condemn Judas, but to call him to repentance. He said it with love in His eyes, and Jesus showed Judas that He loved him, even knowing his treachery.

3. (Mat_26:26-30) Jesus institutes the Lord’s Supper.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

a. **Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it:** The **bread** and the **cup** of wine were elements used in the Passover. Jesus filled them with new meaning, as tools to commemorate a new act of redemption, and to demonstrate our personal fellowship with Jesus Himself.

i. This is how we *remember* what Jesus did for us. We cannot eat the **bread** without remembering how Jesus was broken, pierced, and beaten with stripes for our redemption.

We cannot drink the **cup** without remembering that His blood was poured out on Calvary for us.

ii. This is how we *fellowship* with Jesus. Because His redemption has reconciled us to God, we can now sit down to a meal with Jesus, and enjoy each other's company.

b. **This is My body . . . this is My blood**: The precise *nature* of the bread and the cup in communion has been the source of great theological controversy.

i. The Roman Catholic Church holds the idea of *transubstantiation*, which teaches that the bread and the wine *actually* become the body and blood of Jesus.

ii. Martin Luther held the idea of *consubstantiation*, which teaches the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine, but by faith they are the same as Jesus' actual body. Luther did not believe in the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but he did not go far from it.

iii. John Calvin taught that Jesus' presence in the bread and wine was real, but only spiritual, not physical. Zwingli taught that the bread and wine are mere symbols that represent the body and blood of Jesus. When the Swiss Reformers debated the issue with Martin Luther at Marburg, there was a huge contention. Luther insisted on some kind of physical presence because Jesus said *this is My body*. He insisted over and over again, writing it on the velvet of the table, *Hoc est corpus meum* - "this is My body" in Latin. Zwingli replied, "Jesus also said I am the vine," and "I am the door," but we understand what He was saying. Luther replied, "I don't know, but if Christ told me to eat dung I would do it knowing that it was good for me." Luther was so strong on this because he saw it as an issue of believing Christ's words, and because he thought Zwingli was compromising, he said he was of *another spirit* (*andere geist*). Ironically, later, Luther later read Calvin's writings on the Lord's Supper

(which were essentially the same as Zwingli's) and seemed to agree with Calvin's views.

iv. Scripturally, we can understand that the bread and the wine are not *mere* symbols, but they are powerful pictures to partake of, to enter in to, as we see the Lord's table as the new Passover.

d. **He gave thanks:** In the ancient Greek language, **thanks** is the word *eucharist*. This is why the commemoration of the Lord's table is sometimes called the *Eucharist*.

e. **When they had sung a hymn:** The singing of hymns and psalms was part of the Passover. How beautiful to think of Jesus singing!

4. (Mat_26:31-35) Jesus predicts the desertion of the disciples.

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

a. **All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night:** Jesus says this not to condemn His disciples, but to show them that He really is in command of the situation, and to demonstrate that the Scriptures regarding the suffering of the Messiah *must* be fulfilled.

b. **After I have been raised:** With this, Jesus shows that He already looks beyond the cross. His eyes are set on *the joy set before Him*. (Heb_12:2)

c. **Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!** Peter, despite his bold proclamation that he will **never be made to stumble**, will fail in what he thought was his strong area: courage and boldness.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1Co_10:12) C. Jesus prays and is arrested in the garden.

1. (Mat_26:36-39) Jesus' prayer in deep distress.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

a. **He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed:** Of course, Jesus is disturbed from knowing the physical horror waiting for Him at the cross. As He came to Gethsemane from central Jerusalem, He crossed the Brook Kidron, and saw in the full moon of Passover the stream flowing red with sacrificial blood from the temple.

b. **My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death:** But more so, Jesus is distressed at the spiritual horror that awaits Him on the cross. Jesus would stand in the place of guilty sinners and receive all the spiritual punishment sinners deserve; He *who knew no sin would be sin for us* (2Co_5:21).

c. **If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me:** God the Father would never deny the Son any request, because Jesus prayed according to the heart and will of the Father. Since Jesus drank the **cup** of judgment at the cross, we know that it is not **possible** for salvation to come any other way. Salvation by the work of Jesus at the cross is the only **possible** way; if there is any other way to be made right before God, then Jesus died an unnecessary death.

2. (Mat_26:40-46) Jesus wins the battle of prayer.

Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak." Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and resting?"

Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

a. **Could you not watch with Me one hour?** Jesus valued and desired the help of His friends in this battle. But even without their help, He endured in prayer until the battle was won.

b. **Prayed the third time, saying the same words:** This shows us that it is not unspiritual to make the same request to God several times. Some hyper-spiritual people believe that if we ask for something more than once, it shows we don't have faith. But Jesus shows us that repeated prayer is completely consistent with steadfast faith.

c. **Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand:** Jesus knew Judas and the those who would arrest Him were on the way. He could have run, and escaped the agony waiting at the cross. But Jesus rose to meet Judas. He is in complete control of all events.

3. (Mat_26:47-56) Jesus' betrayal and arrest.

And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss,

He is the One; seize Him.” Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

a. **Greetings, Rabbi!** Judas warmly greeted Jesus, even giving Him the customary **kiss**. But the **kiss** only precisely identified Jesus to the authorities who came to arrest Jesus. There are no more hollow, hypocritical words in the Bible than “**Greetings, Rabbi!**” in the mouth of Judas. The loving, heartfelt words of Jesus - calling Judas “**Friend**” - stand in sharp contrast.

b. **One of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear:** Matthew doesn’t tell us, but we know from Joh_18:10

that this unnamed swordsman was Peter. But Jesus didn’t need his help with the sword. If He wanted it, Jesus had **more than twelve legions of angels** (something in the area of 36,000 angels) waiting to help Him.

i. The number is impressive, especially considering that one angel killed up to 185,000 soldiers in one night (2Ki_19:35).

ii. With one sword, Peter is willing to take on a small army of men. Yet he couldn't pray with Jesus for one hour. Often prayer is the very hardest, and best work we can do.

iii. With his sword, Peter accomplished very little. He only cut off one ear, and really just made a mess that Jesus had to clean up by healing the severed ear (Luk_22:51). When Peter moved in the power of the world, he only cut off ears. But when he was filled with the Spirit, using the Word of God, Peter pierced hearts for God's glory (Act_2:37).

c. **All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled:** With all power at His disposal, Jesus is in total command. He is not the victim of circumstance, but He is managing circumstances for the fulfillment of prophecy.

D. The trial before the Sanhedrin.

1. (Mat_26:57-61) In violation of their own laws and customs, Jesus is tried before the Sanhedrin, the high court among the Jews.

And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

a. On the night of His betrayal, and the day of His crucifixion, Jesus actually stood in trial several times, before different judges. It will be helpful to fill in the gaps provided by the other gospel accounts.

i. Before Jesus came to the home of Caiaphas (the official high priest) He was led to the home of Annas, who was the

ex-high priest and the “power behind the throne” of the high priest (Joh_18:12-14, John 19-23).

ii. As recorded here in Matthew 26, Jesus was then led to the home of Caiaphas, the sitting high priest. He was tried before an ad-hoc gathering of the Sanhedrin that met during the night.

iii. After the break of dawn, the Sanhedrin gathered again, this time “officially,” and they conducted the trial described in Luk_22:66-71.

b. Where the scribes and the elders were assembled:

This nighttime trial was illegal according to the Sanhedrin’s own laws and regulations. According to Jewish law, all criminal trials must begin and end in the daylight. Therefore, though the decision to condemn Jesus was already made, they conducted a second trial in daylight (Luk_22:66-71), because they knew the first one - the *real* trial - had no legal standing.

i. This was only one of many illegalities made in the trial of Jesus. According to Jewish law, only decisions made in the official meeting place were valid. The first trial was held at the home of Caiaphas, the high priest.

ii. According to Jewish law, criminal cases could not be tried during the Passover season.

iii. According to Jewish law, only an acquittal could be issued on the day of the trial. Guilty verdicts had to wait one night to allow for feelings of mercy to rise.

iv. According to Jewish law, all evidence had to be guaranteed by two witnesses, who were separately examined and could not have contact with each other.

v. According to Jewish law, false witness was punishable by death. Nothing was done to the **many false witnesses** in Jesus’ trial.

vi. According to Jewish law, a trial always began by bringing forth evidence for the innocence of the accused, before the evidence of guilt was offered. This was not the practice here.

c. **This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days”** : After all the false witnesses had their say, Jesus is finally “charged” with a “bomb threat” against the temple.

Clearly, Jesus said “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” (Joh_2:19). But this glorious prophecy of His resurrection (Joh_2:21 makes it clear, *He was speaking of the temple of His body*) was twisted into a terrorist threat.

2. (Mat_26:62-64) Jesus testifies at His trial.

And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Jesus said to him, “*It is as you said*. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

a. **Do You answer nothing?** Jesus sat silently until He was commanded by the office of the high priest to answer the accusations against Him. Finally, the high priest demanded to know if Jesus was the Messiah, **the Christ, the Son of God**.

b. **It is as you said:** Jesus isn’t at this trial to defend Himself. We think of the amazing defense He *could have* made. Jesus could have called witness after witness, and pointed to irrefutable evidence that He was indeed **the Christ, the Son of God**. But He knows that these hardened hearts care nothing for the *facts* of this case, so He simply testifies to the truth: **It is as you said**.

c. **You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven:** Jesus did add this one word of warning. He warned them that though they sit in judgment of Him now, He will one day sit in judgment of them - and with a far more binding judgment.

3. (Mat_26:65-68) The Sanhedrin reacts with horror and brutality.

Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses?

Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ!

Who is the one who struck You?"

a. **He has spoken blasphemy!** The accusation of **blasphemy** would have been correct, except that Jesus *was* whom He said He was. It is no crime for the Christ, the Son of God, to declare who He really is.

b. **He is deserving of death:** Their verdict reveals the depths of man's depravity. God, in total perfection, came to earth, lived among men, and this was man's reply to God.

c. **They spat in His face and beat Him:** It's easy to think that they did this to Jesus because they didn't know who He was. That is true in one sense, because they would not admit to themselves that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. But in another sense, it is not true at all, because by nature man is an enemy of God (Rom_5:10, Col_1:21). For a long time, man waited to *literally* spit in God's face and to **beat Him**. Because of the amazing humble nature of Jesus, here mankind can do this.

4. (Mat_26:69-75) Peter, fearing association with Jesus, denies his relationship with Jesus three times.

Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

But he denied it before *them* all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." And when he had gone out to the gateway,

another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, "This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But again he denied

with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you

also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you." Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

a. **A servant girl came to him:** Peter is not being grilled before a hostile court, or an angry mob. His own fear made **a servant girl** and **another girl** hostile monsters in Peter's eyes, and he cowered in fear before them.

b. **I do not know the Man!** Peter's sin of denying his association with Jesus grows worse with each denial. First, he merely lied; then he took an **oath** to the lie, then **he began to curse and swear**.

c. In Mark - traditionally, written under Peter's influence - this account is more detailed. Because this story is such an amazing example of man's weakness and God's forgiveness and restoration, Peter wanted this story told.

d. We see a significant contrast between Judas (showing *apostasy*) and Peter (showing *backsliding*).

i. Apostasy is giving up the truth, as Judas did. Judas was sorry about his sin, but it was not a sorrow leading to repentance.

ii. Backsliding is a decline from a spiritual experience once enjoyed. Peter slipped, but he will not fall; his bitter weeping will lead to repentance and restoration.

(Mat 26:2) "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over² to be crucified."³

(Mat 26:3) Then the chief priests and the elders of the people met together in the palace of the high priest, who was named Caiaphas.

(Mat 26:4) They⁴ planned to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

(Mat 26:5) But they said, "Not during the feast, so that there won't be a riot among the people."⁵

(Mat 26:6) ***Jesus' Anointing***

Now while Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,

(Mat 26:7) a woman came to him with an alabaster jar⁶ of expensive perfumed oil,⁷ and she poured it on his head as he was at the table.⁸

(Mat 26:8) When⁹ the disciples saw this, they became indignant and said, "Why this waste?

(Mat 26:9) It¹⁰ could have been sold at a high price and the money¹¹ given to the poor!"

(Mat 26:10) When¹² Jesus learned of this, he said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She¹³ has done a good service for me.

(Mat 26:11) For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me!¹⁴

(Mat 26:12) When¹⁵ she poured this oil on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

(Mat 26:13) I tell you the truth,¹⁶ wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

(Mat 26:14) ***The Plan to Betray Jesus***

Then one of the twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

(Mat 26:15) and said, "What will you give me to betray him into your hands?"¹⁷ So they set out thirty silver coins for him.

(Mat 26:16) From that time¹⁸ on, Judas¹⁹ began looking for an opportunity to betray him.

(Mat 26:17) ***The Passover***

Now on the first day of the feast of²⁰ Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and said,²¹ "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?"²²

(Mat 26:18) He²³ said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near. I will observe the Passover with my disciples at your house." ' "

(Mat 26:19) So²⁴ the disciples did as Jesus had instructed them, and they prepared the Passover.

(Mat 26:20) When²⁵ it was evening, he took his place at the table²⁶ with the twelve.²⁷

(Mat 26:21) And while they were eating he said, "I tell you the truth,²⁸ one of you will betray me."²⁹

(Mat 26:22) They³⁰ became greatly distressed³¹ and each one began to say to him, "Surely not I, Lord?"

(Mat 26:23) He³² answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me³³ will betray me.

(Mat 26:24) The Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born."

(Mat 26:25) Then³⁴ Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus³⁵ replied, "You have said it yourself."

(Mat 26:26) ***The Lord's Supper***

While³⁶ they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body."

(Mat 26:27) And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, (Mat 26:28) for this is my blood, the blood³⁷ of the covenant,³⁸ that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

(Mat 26:29) I³⁹ tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit⁴⁰ of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

(Mat 26:30) After⁴¹ singing a hymn,⁴² they went out to the Mount of Olives.

(Mat 26:31) ***The Prediction of Peter's Denial***

Then Jesus said to them, "This night you will all fall away because of me, for it is written:

**' I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. '43**

(Mat 26:32) But after I am raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

(Mat 26:33) Peter⁴⁴ said to him, "If they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away!"

(Mat 26:34) Jesus said to him, "I tell you the truth,⁴⁵ on this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

(Mat 26:35) Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." And all the disciples said the same thing.

(Mat 26:36) **Gethsemane**

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

(Mat 26:37) He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and became anguished and distressed.

(Mat 26:38) Then he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake with me."

(Mat 26:39) Going a little farther, he threw himself down with his face to the ground and prayed,⁴⁶ "My Father, if possible,⁴⁷ let this cup⁴⁸ pass from me! Yet not what I will, but what you will."

(Mat 26:40) Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. He⁴⁹ said to Peter, "So, couldn't you stay awake with me for one hour?"

(Mat 26:41) Stay awake and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

(Mat 26:42) He went away a second time and prayed,⁵⁰ "My Father, if this cup⁵¹ cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will must be done."

(Mat 26:43) He came again and found them sleeping; they could not keep their eyes open.⁵²

(Mat 26:44) So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same thing once more.

(Mat 26:45) Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is approaching, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

(Mat 26:46) Get up, let us go. Look! My betrayer⁵³ is approaching!"

(Mat 26:47) ***Betrayal and Arrest***

While he was still speaking, Judas,⁵⁴ one of the twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people.

(Mat 26:48) (Now the betrayer⁵⁵ had given them a sign, saying, "The one I kiss is the man.⁵⁶ Arrest him!")⁵⁷

(Mat 26:49) Immediately⁵⁸ he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi," and kissed him.⁵⁹

(Mat 26:50) Jesus⁶⁰ said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and took hold⁶¹ of Jesus and arrested him.

(Mat 26:51) But⁶² one of those with Jesus grabbed⁶³ his sword, drew it out, and struck the high priest's slave,⁶⁴ cutting off his ear.

(Mat 26:52) Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place!⁶⁵ For all who take hold of the sword will die by the sword.

(Mat 26:53) Or do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and that he would send me more than twelve legions⁶⁶ of angels right now?

(Mat 26:54) How then would the scriptures that say it must happen this way be fulfilled?"

(Mat 26:55) At that moment Jesus said to the crowd, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me like you

would an outlaw?⁶⁷ Day after day I sat teaching in the temple courts, yet⁶⁸ you did not arrest me.

(Mat 26:56) But this has happened so that⁶⁹ the scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

(Mat 26:57) ***Condemned by the Sanhedrin***

Now the ones who had arrested Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, in whose house⁷⁰ the experts in the law⁷¹ and the elders had gathered.

(Mat 26:58) But Peter was following him from a distance, all the way to the high priest's courtyard. After⁷² going in, he sat with the guards⁷³ to see the outcome.

(Mat 26:59) The⁷⁴ chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were trying to find false testimony against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

(Mat 26:60) But they did not find anything, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally⁷⁵ two came forward (Mat 26:61) and declared, "This man⁷⁶ said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' "

(Mat 26:62) So⁷⁷ the high priest stood up and said to him, "Have you no answer? What is this that they are testifying against you?"

(Mat 26:63) But Jesus was silent. The⁷⁸ high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ,⁷⁹ the Son of God."

(Mat 26:64) Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man *sitting at the right hand* ⁸⁰ of the Power⁸¹ and *coming on the clouds of heaven*."⁸²

(Mat 26:65) Then the high priest tore his clothes and declared,⁸³ "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? Now⁸⁴ you have heard the blasphemy!

(Mat 26:66) What is your verdict?"⁸⁵ They⁸⁶ answered, "He is guilty and deserves⁸⁷ death."

(Mat 26:67) Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. And some slapped him, (Mat 26:68) saying, "Prophecy for us, you Christ!88 Who hit you?"89

(Mat 26:69) ***Peter's Denials***

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A90 slave girl91 came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean."

(Mat 26:70) But he denied it in front of them all:92 "I don't know what you're talking about!"

(Mat 26:71) When93 he went out to the gateway, another slave girl94 saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene."

(Mat 26:72) He denied it again with an oath, "I do not know the man!"

(Mat 26:73) After95 a little while, those standing there came up to Peter and said, "You really are one of them too — even your accent96 gives you away!"

(Mat 26:74) At that he began to curse, and he swore with an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment a rooster crowed.97

(Mat 26:75) Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.98

(Mat 27:1) ***Jesus Brought Before Pilate***

When1 it was early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people plotted against Jesus to execute him.

(Guzik)

Mat 27:1-66

MATTHEW 27 - JESUS' TRIAL, DEATH, AND BURIAL

A. The death of Judas.

1. (Mat_27:1-2) Jesus is handed over to Pilate.

When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

a. **They led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate:** The Sanhedrin gave Jesus over to **Pontius Pilate**, the Roman appointed governor over Judea, because they did not have the authority to put Him to death.

i. The Jewish leaders had reason to expect a favorable result when they went to Pilate.

Secular history shows us that he was a cruel, ruthless man, almost completely insensitive to the moral feelings of others. Surely, they thought, *Pilate* will put this Jesus to death.

b. Essentially, they did this on the basis of three totally false, politically motivated charges: that Jesus was a revolutionary; that He incited the people to not pay their taxes, and that He claimed to be a king in opposition to Caesar.

2. (Mat_27:3-10) Judas' miserable end.

Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "*What is that to us? You see to it!*" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood."

And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

a. **Was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver:** Judas was filled with *remorse*, not repentance. Even though he knew exactly what he did (**I have sinned by betraying innocent blood**), Judas was more sorry for the result of his sin than for the sin itself. There is a huge difference in being sorry *about* your sin, and being sorry *for* your sin.

b. **It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood:** The hypocrisy of the chief priests is transparent. They don't want to "defile" themselves with **the price of blood**, even though it was a price that they themselves paid.

c. **Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet:** There has been much question about the quotation attributed to **Jeremiah**, because it is found in Zec_11:12-13. Why does Matthew say the word **was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet** when it is recorded in Zechariah?

i. Some think it could be a copyist error. Perhaps Matthew wrote *Zechariah*, but an early copyist put *Jeremiah* instead.

ii. Some think that **Jeremiah** spoke this prophecy and Zechariah recorded it. This may be the word **spoken by Jeremiah**, but *recorded* by Zechariah.

iii. Some think that Matthew refers to *scroll* of Jeremiah, which included the book of Zechariah.

B. Jesus before Pilate.

1. (Mat_27:11-14) Jesus greatly impresses Pilate.

Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "*It is as you say.*" And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

a. **Now Jesus stood before the governor:** History shows us Pontius Pilate was a cruel and ruthless man, unkind to

Jews, and contemptuous of almost everything but raw power. Here, he seems out of character in the way he handles Jesus. Jesus must have profoundly affected him.

b. **Are You the King of the Jews?** When they brought Him to Pilate, the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of promoting Himself as a king in defiance of Caesar. They wanted to make Jesus seem like a dangerous revolutionary against the Roman Empire. Therefore, Pilate asked Jesus this simple question.

i. Of course, we can only wonder what Pilate thought when he first laid eyes on Jesus, when he saw this beaten and bloodied Man before him. Jesus didn't look especially regal or majestic as He stood before Pilate, so the Roman **governor** was probably sarcastic or ironic when he asked, **"Are You the King of the Jews?"**

c. **It is as you say:** No majestic defense, no instant miracle to save His own skin. Jesus gave Pilate the same simple reply He gave to the high priest (Mat_27:11). This amazed Pilate; he asked **"Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"** Pilate couldn't believe that such a strong, dignified man -

as beaten and bloody as He was - would stand silent at these accusations.

i. There is a time to defend one's cause or one's self, but those times are rare. When we rise to our own defense, we would usually be better off staying silent and trusting God to defend us.

2. (Mat_27:15-23) The crowd chooses Barabbas; Pilate's desire to release Jesus.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on

the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" *They* all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

a. **Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?** Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and had only be brought to him **because of envy**. So he looked for a way to release Jesus, and hoped he found a way in the custom of releasing one Jewish prisoner at the time of Passover.

b. **His wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man"** : Pilate had all the evidence he needed to do the right thing and release Jesus. But he would not do what he knew was right, because he cared more about what the crowd said than what he knew was right.

- o He saw the strength and dignity of Jesus, and he knew this was no criminal or revolutionary.

- o He knew that it was no just charge that brought Jesus before his judgment seat - it was only the **envy** of the religious leaders.

- o He saw that Jesus was a man so at peace with His God that He didn't need to answer a single accusation.

- o He already declared Jesus an innocent man (*I find no fault in this Man*, Luk_23:4).

- o His wife *warned him* to leave Jesus alone, being divinely warned in a dream. Surely, that was something exceptional!

c. **"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"** The voice of the crowd is not *always* the voice of God. The mob does not answer

Pilate's request for reasons ("What evil has He done? "), they only call for Jesus' death. Really, the call for more than His death - they call for Him to be executed by torture through crucifixion.

d. When the crowd chose Barabbas instead of Jesus, it reflected the fallen nature of all humanity. The name "Barabbas" means *son of the father*. They chose a false, violent *son of the father* instead of the true Son of the Father. This prefigures the future embrace of the ultimate Barabbas - the one popularly called the Antichrist.

e. If anyone knew what it meant that Jesus died in their place, it was **Barabbas**. He was a terrorist and a murderer, yet he was set free while Jesus was crucified. The cross Jesus hung on was probably originally intended for Barabbas.

i. We can imagine Barabbas, in a dark prison cell with a small window, waiting to be crucified. Through the window he can hear the crowd gathered before Pilate, not far away from the Fortress Antonia where he is imprisoned. Perhaps he could not hear Pilate ask, "**Which of the two do you want me to release to you?** " But surely he heard the crowd shout back, "**Barabbas.**" He probably could not hear Pilate ask, "**What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?** " But he certainly heard the crowd respond, "**Let Him be crucified.**" If all Barabbas heard from his cell was his name shouted by the mob, then "**Let Him be crucified,**" when the soldiers came to his cell, he surely thought it was time for him to die a tortured death. But when the soldiers said, "Barabbas, you are a guilty man - but you will be released because Jesus will die in your place," Barabbas knew the meaning of the cross better than most. We wonder if he ever took it to heart, and if we will hear the testimony of his salvation in heaven.

3. (Mat_27:24-25) Pilate tries to avoid responsibility for Jesus' fate.

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his*

hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*.” And all the people answered and said, “His blood *be* on us and on our children.”

a. **He took water and washed his hands before the multitude:** Pilate could never wash his hands of this. It was a responsibility that could not be avoided, and his guilt is echoed in the creeds (*crucified under Pontius Pilate*) throughout the centuries.

b. **I am innocent of the blood of this just Person:** Hidden in Pilate’s attempt at self-justification is a declaration of Jesus’ innocence. When he called Jesus **this just Person**, he admitted that Jesus was the innocent man - not Pilate. Just because Pilate *said* “**I am innocent**” doesn’t mean that he was **innocent**.

c. **His blood be on us and on our children:** They really had not understanding of what they asked for.

They didn’t understand the glory of Jesus’ cleansing blood, and how wonderful it would be to have **His blood . . . on us and on our children**. They also didn’t understand the enormity of the crime of calling for the execution of the sinless Son of God, and the judgment that would be visited on their children some forty years later in the destruction of Jerusalem.

C. The suffering of Jesus Christ.

1. (Mat_27:26) Scourging: a customary prelude to crucifixion.

Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

a. **When he had scourged Jesus:** The blows came from a whip with many leather strands, each having sharp pieces of bone or metal at the ends. It reduced the back to raw flesh, and it was not unusual for a criminal to die from a scourging, even before crucifixion.

i. “Scourging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt.” (Dr. William

Edwards in the article "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 3/21/86)

ii. The goal of the scourging was to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse and death. "As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh.

Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive the cross." (Edwards)

iii. "The severe scourging, with its intense pain and appreciable blood loss, most probably left Jesus in a pre-shock state. Moreover, hematidrosis had rendered his skin particularly tender.

The physical and mental abuse meted out by the Jews and the Romans, as well as the lack of food, water, and sleep, also contributed to his generally weakened state. Therefore, even before the actual crucifixion, Jesus' physical condition was at least serious and possibly critical." (Edwards)

b. The blows of scourging would lessen as the criminal confessed to his crimes. Jesus remained silent, having no crimes to confess, so the blows continued with full strength.

2. (Mat_27:27-31) Jesus is beaten and mocked.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took

the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

a. **Mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”**

Everything in this scene was intended to humiliate Jesus.

o **They stripped Him:** When a prisoner was crucified, they were often nailed to the cross naked - simply to increase their humiliation. Jesus hasn’t been crucified yet, but His humiliation has begun, and He was publicly **stripped**.

o **Put a scarlet robe on Him:** Kings and rulers often wore **scarlet**, because the dyes to make fabrics that color were expensive. The **scarlet robe** was intended as cruel irony.

o **They had twisted a crown of thorns:** Kings wear crowns, but not crowns of torture. The specific thorn-bushes of this region have long, hard, sharp thorns. This was a crown that cut, pierced, and bloodied the head of the King wearing it.

o **A reed in His right hand:** Kings hold scepters, but glorious, ornate scepters that symbolize their power. In their mockery of Jesus, they give Him a **scepter** - but a thin, weak **reed**.

o **They bowed the knee before Him:** Kings are honored, so they offer mocking worship to this King.

o **“Hail, King of the Jews!”** Kings are greeting with royal titles, so in their spite they mocked Jesus with this title. It was meant to put down not only Jesus, but also the **Jews** - saying, “This is the best King they could come up with.”

b. **Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head:** They now shift from mockery to cruelty. They seize the ironic “scepter,” take off the “kingly” robe, and begin to hurl spit and fists and the head of Jesus.

c. **And led Him away to be crucified:** The march to the place of crucifixion was useful advertising for Rome. It warned potential troublemakers that this was their fate should they challenge Rome. A centurion on horseback led the procession, and a herald shouted the crime of the condemned.

i. As Jesus was led away to be crucified, He was - like all victims of crucifixion - forced to carry the wood He would hang upon. The weight of the entire cross was typically 300 pounds. The victim only carried the crossbar, which weighed anywhere from 75 to 125

pounds. When the victim carried the crossbar, he was usually stripped naked, and his hands were often tied to the wood.

ii. The upright beams of a cross were usually permanently fixed in a visible place outside of the city walls, beside a major road. It is likely that on many occasions, Jesus passed by the very upright He would hang upon.

iii. When Jesus said, *If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me* (Mat_16:24), this is exactly the scene He had in mind. Everyone knew what the cross was: an unrelenting instrument of nothing but death. The cross wasn't about religious ceremonies; it wasn't about traditions and spiritual feelings. The cross was a way to execute people. But in these twenty centuries after the death of Jesus, we have sanitized and ritualized the cross. How would we receive it if Jesus said, "walk down death row daily and follow Me"? Taking up your cross wasn't a journey; it was a one-way trip.

There was no return ticketing; it was never a round trip.

3. (Mat_27:32-34) On the way to **Golgotha** (in Latin, *Calvary*).

Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink.

a. **A man of Cyrene, Simon by name**: This man was probably a visitor to Jerusalem, there as a faithful Jew to celebrate the Passover. He was far from **Cyrene** in North Africa (some 800 miles away).

b. **Him they compelled to bear His cross:** Simon knew little if anything about this Jesus, and had no desire to be associated with this Man who was condemned to die as a criminal. Yet the Romans were the law, and Simon was not given a choice. **Him they compelled to bear His cross.** Perhaps he was chosen because his skin was black, and he was more conspicuous in the crowd.

i. Wonderfully, we have reason to believe that Simon came to know what it *really meant* to take up one's cross and follow Jesus. We know that his sons became leaders among the early Christians (Mar_15:21 and Rom_16:13).

c. **A place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull:** There was a specific place outside the city walls of Jerusalem, yet still very close, where people were crucified. At this **Place of a Skull** Jesus died for our sins, and our salvation was accomplished.

i. **Golgotha** - in Latin, "Calvary" (Luk_23:33) means "**Place of a Skull.**" It was called that because it was the established place - outside the city walls, yet on a well-established road -

where criminals were crucified. It may also be that the hill itself had a skull-like appearance, as is the case with the site in Jerusalem known as Gordon's Calvary.

d. **They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink:** It was customary to give those about to be crucified a pain and mind-numbing drink, to lessen their awareness of the agony awaiting them. But Jesus refused any numbing drug. He chose to face the spiritual and physical terror with all His senses awake.

4. (Mat_27:35 a) Jesus is crucified.

Then they crucified Him,

a. We have yet to see an accurate depiction of crucifixion in our media. If it were ever made, it would be limited to adult audiences, because of its sheer horror and brutality.

i. The Bible spares us the gory descriptions of Jesus' agony, simply stating **then they crucified Him**. This is because everyone in Matthew's day was well acquainted with the terror of crucifixion, and because the greater aspect of Jesus' suffering was spiritual, not physical

ii. In 1986, Dr. William Edwards wrote a remarkable article in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* titled "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." Following are some of the observations of Dr. Edwards and his associates. The quotations belong to the article, and much of the other text is paraphrased from the article.

iii. What was it like to be crucified? In days the New Testament was first written, the practice needed no explanation. But we would do well to appreciate just what happened at a

crucifixion. "Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering."

iv. The victim's back would first be torn open by the scourging, then the clotting blood would be ripped open again when the clothes were torn off the victim. When thrown on the ground to fix his hands to the crossbeam, the wounds would again be torn open and contaminated with dirt. Then, as he hung on the cross, with each breath, the painful wounds on the back would scrape against the rough wood of the upright beam and be further aggravated

v. Driving the nail through the wrists would sever the large median nerve - this stimulated nerve would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms, and could result in a claw-like grip in the victim's hands.

vi. Beyond the excruciating pain, the major effect of crucifixion inhibited normal breathing.

The weight of the body, pulling down on the arms and shoulders, would tend to fix the respiratory muscles in an inhalation state, and hinder exhalation. The lack of

adequate respiration would result in severe muscle cramps, which would hinder breathing even further. To get a good breath, one would have to push against the feet, and flex the elbows, pulling from the shoulders. Putting the weight of the body on the feet would produce searing pain, and flexing of the elbows would twist the hands hanging on the nails. Lifting the body for a breath would also painfully scrape the back against the rough wooden post. Each effort to get a proper breath would be agonizing, exhausting, and lead to a sooner death.

vii. “Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites.

Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals.”

viii. Death from crucifixion could come from many sources: acute shock from blood loss; being too exhausted to breathe any longer; dehydration; stress-induced heart attack, or congestive heart failure leading to a cardiac rupture. If the victim did not die quickly enough, the legs would be broken, and the victim would soon be unable to breathe.

ix. How bad was crucifixion? We get our English word *excruciating* from the Roman word “out of the cross.” “Consider how heinous sin must be in the sight of God, when it requires such a sacrifice!” (Commentator Adam Clarke)

x. The most significant thing about Jesus’ sufferings was that He was not, in any sense, the victim of circumstances. He was in control. Jesus said of His life in Joh_10:18, *no one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself*. It is terrible to be forced to endure such torture, but to freely choose it out of love is remarkable. Can we ever doubt God’s love for us again? Has He not gone to the most extreme length to demonstrate it?

b. No wonder that the Roman statesman Cicero said of crucifixion: “It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen; to scourge

him is an act of wickedness; to execute him is almost murder: What shall I say of crucifying him?

An act so abominable it is impossible to find any word adequately to express.”

c. The Roman historian Tacitus deemed crucifixion “A torture fit only for slaves” who were seen as sub-human.

d. No Roman citizen could be crucified except by direct order of Caesar; it was reserved for the worst criminals and lowest classes.

5. (Mat_27:35-44) Jesus is mocked on the cross.

And divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: “They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”

Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: This is Jesus the King of the Jews. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

a. **Divided His garments, casting lots:** Jesus came all the way down the ladder to accomplish our salvation. He let go of absolutely everything - even His clothes - becoming completely poor for us, so we could become completely rich in Him.

b. **That it might be fulfilled:** It may seem that Jesus has *no control* over these events. Yet the invisible hand of God guides all things, so that specific prophecies are specifically fulfilled.

c. **This is Jesus the King of the Jews:** In Joh_19:21, it is written that the religious leaders among the Jews objected to this title. They felt it was *false*, because they did not believe that Jesus was **the King of the Jews**. They also believed it was *demeaning*, because it showed Rome's power to humiliate and torture even the "**King of the Jews**." Yet Pilate would not budge, and when asked to take down the inscription answered, *What I have written, I have written* (Joh_19:22).

d. **Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left:** In His crucifixion, Jesus stands right in the center of sinful humanity. One of these **robbers** repented and trusted in Jesus, and one did not (Luk_23:39-43).

f. **And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads:** In the midst of this awesome display of love, Jesus is not honored. Instead, He is **blasphemed**, and His enemies sneered, saying, "**Save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.**" They acted as if Jesus did this, then they would **believe Him**.

i. It is precisely because He did *not* save Himself that He can save others. Love kept Jesus on the cross, not nails!

ii. Jesus did greater than come down from the cross; He rose from the dead, yet they did not believe even then.

g. **Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing:** It's hard to go lower than this. Even among the three crucified men, Jesus was put in the "lowest" position.

i. This is the epitome of God's love for man, to go through this for our salvation. But it is also the epitome of man's hatred for God; God came to earth, and this is what man did to Him.

D. The death of Jesus.

1. (Mat_27:45) An unusual darkness on the land.

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

a. **There was darkness over all the land:** The remarkable **darkness** all over the earth showed the agony of creation itself in the Creator's suffering. "Origen (*Contra Celsus*, ii,33) and Eusebius (*Chron.*) quote words from Phlegon (a Roman historian) in which he makes mention of an extraordinary solar eclipse as well as of an earthquake about the time of the crucifixion." (Geldenhuis in his commentary on Luke)

b. Phlegon, Roman historian wrote this: "In the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad, there was an extraordinary eclipse of the sun: at the sixth hour, the day turned into dark night, so that the stars in heaven were seen; and there was an earthquake." (Cited in Clarke)

ii. This is especially remarkable because during a full moon - which Passover was always held at - it was impossible that there be a *natural* eclipse of the sun.

2. (Mat_27:46-49) Jesus cries out to the Father in agony. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!"

Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

a. **My God, My God:** In quoting Psalms 22, Jesus declared His fulfillment of that prophecy, in both its agony and its exultation. The Psalm goes on to say, *You have answered Me. I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You.* (Psa_22:21-22)

b. **Why have You forsaken Me?** Jesus knew great pain and suffering - both physical and emotional - in His life, but had never known separation from His Father; now He does. There was a significant sense in which Jesus rightly felt **forsaken** by the Father at this moment.

i. How? Because *God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (2Co_5:21)

ii. But Jesus not only endured the *withdrawal* of the Father's fellowship, but also the actual outpouring of the Father's *wrath* upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity.

iii. Horrible as this was, it fulfilled God's good and loving plan of redemption. Therefore Isaiah can say *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.* (Isa_53:10)

iv. At the same time, we cannot say that the separation between the Father and the Son at the cross was complete. Paul made this clear in 2Co_5:19 : *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself* at the cross.

c. The *agony* of this cry is significant. It rarely grieves man to be separated from God, or to consider that he is a *worthy* object of God's wrath. Yet this was the true agony of Jesus on the cross.

d. **This man is calling for Elijah:** Sadly, Jesus was misunderstood and mocked until the bitter end.

These observers thought it was all an interesting test case to see if **Elijah** would actually come.

3. (Mat_27:50) The death of Jesus.

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

a. **Jesus cried out again with a loud voice:** Joh_19:30 tells us that He said, "*it is finished*," which is one word in the ancient Greek - *tetelestai*, which means, "paid in full." This is the cry of a winner, because Jesus fully paid the debt of sin we owed, and finished the eternal purpose of the cross.

b. At some point before He died, before the veil was torn in two, before He cried out *it is finished*, an awesome spiritual transaction took place. God the Father laid upon God the Son all the guilt and wrath our sin deserved, and He bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the wrath of God for us.

i. As horrible as the physical suffering of Jesus was, this spiritual suffering - the act of being judged for sin in our place - was what Jesus really dreaded about the cross. This was the *cup* -

the cup of God's righteous wrath - that He trembled at drinking (Luk_22:39-46, Psa_75:8, Isa_51:17, Jer_25:15). On the cross, Jesus became, as it were, an enemy of God who was judged and forced to drink the cup of the Father's fury. He did it so we would not have to drink that cup.

ii. Isa_53:3-5 puts it powerfully: *He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*

iii. "Reader! *one drop* of this cup would bear down thy soul to endless ruin; and these agonies would annihilated the universe. He suffered *alone*: for the people there was none with him; because his sufferings were to make an atonement for the sins of the world: and in the work of redemption he had no helper." (Clarke)

c. **And yielded up His spirit:** No one took Jesus' life from Him; He, in a manner unlike any man, **yielded up His spirit**. Death had no righteous hold over the sinless Son of God. He stood *in the place* of sinners, but was never a sinner Himself. So He could not die unless He **yielded up His spirit**.

i. As Jesus said, *I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* (Joh_10:17-18)

ii. "He gave up his life because He willed it, when He willed it, and as He willed it."

(Augustine)

4. (Mat_27:51-56) The immediate results of Jesus' death.

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

a. **The veil of the temple was torn in two:** The **veil** is what separated the holy place from the most holy place in the temple. It was a vivid demonstration of the separation between God and man. Notably, the veil was torn from **top to bottom**, and it was God who did the tearing.

i. Act_6:7 says that in the days of the early church, *a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith*. It would be interesting to know if this torn veil demonstrated to them the greatness of the work of Jesus. It's also probably *how* the torn veil became common knowledge.

b. **The earth quaked, and the rocks were split:** Nature itself is shaken by the death of the Son of God.

c. **Graves were opened:** This is one of the strangest passages in the Gospel of Matthew. We don't know about this event from any other source, and Matthew doesn't tell us very much. So we really don't know what this was all about, but apparently these resuscitated saints died again, because they were raised from the dead in the sense that Lazarus was.

d. **Truly this was the Son of God!** The scene at the crucifixion of Jesus was so striking that even a hardened

Roman centurion confessed that **this was the Son of God**. This man had supervised the death of perhaps hundreds of other men by crucifixion, but he knew there was something absolutely unique about Jesus.

i. **This was the Son of God**: The only thing wrong is his verb tense; Jesus *is* **the Son of God**. The Roman centurion seems to assume that He was *no longer* the Son of God.

E. The burial of Jesus.

1. (Mat_27:57-61) Joseph of Arimathea sets Jesus in his own tomb.

Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

a. **This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus**: Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses of executed men to friends or relatives for proper burial.

b. **He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth**: Joseph followed the burial customs of that day - the best he could, considering that they had very little time because *the Sabbath drew near* (Luk_23:54).

c. **He rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb**: This was the customary way to seal an expensive tomb. A rich man like Joseph of Arimathea would probably have a tomb that was carved into solid rock; this tomb was in a garden near the place of crucifixion (Joh_19:41). The tomb would have a small entrance and perhaps one or more

compartments where bodies were laid out after being somewhat mummified with spices, ointments, and linen strips. Customarily, the Jews left these bodies alone for a few years until they decayed down to the bones, then the bones were placed in a small stone box known as an ossuary. The ossuary remained in the tomb with the remains of other family members.

i. The door to the tomb was typically made of a heavy, circular shaped stone, running in a groove and settled down into a channel, so it could not be moved except by several strong men. This was done to ensure that no one would disturb the remains.

ii. Joh_19:42 specifically tells us that the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea that Jesus was laid in was close to the place of Jesus' crucifixion (and the each of the two suggested places for Jesus' death and resurrection bear this out). Joseph probably didn't like it that the value of his family tomb decreased because the Romans decided to crucify people nearby - yet it reminds us that in God's plan, the cross and the power of the resurrection are always permanently and closely connected.

iii. Tombs like this were very expensive. It was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give his up - but Jesus would only use it for a few days!

2. (Mat_27:62-66) The tomb is sealed and guarded.

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

a. **Sir:** They give Pilate this title of honor and respect. But the day before they just rejected the King of Kings. They mocked and despised Him, putting Him to open shame, but they honored Pilate.

b. **We remember . . . how that deceiver said, “After three days I will rise”** : Ironically, Jesus’ enemies remembered His promise of resurrection better than His own disciples remembered.

c. **While He was still alive:** In this, the enemies of Jesus admit that Jesus is dead. They don’t buy into the “Swoon Theory,” the one that says Jesus never really died, but just “swooned” on the cross, and then somehow wonderfully revived in the tomb.

i. A humorous letter to the editor to a Christian magazine accurately evaluated the “Swoon Theory”:

Dear Eutychus: Our preacher said, on Easter, that Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed Him back to health. What do you think? Sincerely, Bewildered

Dear Bewildered: Beat your preacher with a cat-of-nine-tails with 39 heavy strokes, nail him to a cross; hang him in the sun for 6 hours; run a spear through his heart; embalm him; put him in an airless tomb for 36 hours and see what happens. Sincerely, Eutychus

d. **Lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away:** What were they really afraid of? They couldn’t have been afraid of the disciples. They knew they were terrified and in hiding. They knew they were gone from the crucifixion scene. Their intelligence sources and informants let them know the disciples were terrified. What were they really afraid of? The power of Jesus.

i. After all, look at their words: **And say to the people, “He has risen from the dead.”**

If that were to happen, why not just say to the disciples, “So where is Jesus? Produce the body of your risen Lord!” They knew that it would do nothing for the disciples to steal the

body of Jesus. That would prove nothing. *What they were really afraid of was the resurrection power of Jesus.*

ii. It's sad that they were afraid of it, but at least they believed it. On Saturday morning, the chief priests and the Pharisees can preach a better resurrection sermon than the disciples could.

e. Command that the tomb be made secure . . . you have a guard . . . make it as secure as you know how:

This shows that both the Jewish leaders and the Romans were well aware of the need to guard the tomb, and that they took all necessary measures to secure it. These security measures will simply provide greater testimony to the miracle of the resurrection. If Jesus' tomb was unguarded then we might not be *certain* that His body wasn't stolen.

f. Sealing the stone and setting the guard: This describes the measures taken to secure the tomb of Jesus.

i. The tomb was secured by a **stone**, which was a material obstacle. These stones were large, and set in a slanted channel. It was a real obstacle. For sure, the stone could not be rolled away from the inside. The disciples, if you had enough of them, could roll away the stone -

but not quietly. Besides, they would have to work *together* to roll it away, and that didn't seem likely.

ii. The tomb was secured by a *seal*, which was an obstacle of human authority. The seal was a rope, overlapping the width of the stone covering the entrance to the tomb. On either side of the doorway, there was a glob of wax securing the rope over the stone. You could not move the rock without breaking the seal. It was important that the guards witness the sealing, because they were responsible for whatever was being sealed. These Roman guards would watch carefully as the stone was sealed, because they knew their careers, and perhaps their lives, were on the line. The Roman seal carried legal authority. It was more than yellow tape barricading a crime scene; to break a Roman seal was to defy Roman

authority. That stone was secured by the authority of the Roman Empire.

iii. The tomb was secured by a **guard**, which was an obstacle of human strength. A typical Roman guard had four soldiers. Two watched while the others rested. This guard might have had more. The soldiers would be fully equipped - sword, shield, spear, dagger, armor. We should also remember that these were *Roman* soldiers. They didn't care about Jesus or Jewish laws or rituals. They were called to secure the tomb of a criminal. To them, the only sacred thing at this tomb was the Roman seal, because if that were broken their careers were ruined and they might be executed themselves. Soldiers cold-blooded enough to gamble over a dying man's clothes were not the kind of men to be tricked by trembling disciples, or would not jeopardize their necks by sleeping at their post.

iv. *None* of these obstacles mattered. Material obstacles don't stand before the resurrected Jesus. Human authority doesn't stand before the resurrected Jesus. Human strength doesn't stand before the resurrected Jesus. It all falls away before Him!

(Mat 27:2) They² tied him up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate³ the governor.⁴

(Mat 27:3) ***Judas'suicide***

Now when⁵ Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus⁶ had been condemned, he regretted what he had done and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders,

(Mat 27:4) saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood!" But they said, "What is that to us? You take care of it yourself!"

(Mat 27:5) So⁷ Judas threw the silver coins into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself.

(Mat 27:6) The⁸ chief priests took the silver and said, "It is not lawful to put this into the temple treasury, since it is

blood money."

(Mat 27:7) After⁹ consulting together they bought the Potter's Field with it, as a burial place for foreigners.

(Mat 27:8) For this reason that field has been called the "Field of Blood" to this day.

(Mat 27:9) Then what was spoken by Jeremiah¹⁰ the prophet was fulfilled: " *They took the thirty silver coins, the price of the one whose price had been set by the people of Israel,*¹¹

(Mat 27:10) *and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.*"¹²

(Mat 27:11) ***Jesus and Pilate***

Then¹³ Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him,¹⁴ "Are you the king¹⁵ of the Jews?" Jesus¹⁶ said, "You say so."¹⁷

(Mat 27:12) But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he did not respond.

(Mat 27:13) Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear how many charges they are bringing against you?"

(Mat 27:14) But he did not answer even one accusation, so that the governor was quite amazed.

(Mat 27:15) During the feast the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner to the crowd,¹⁸ whomever they wanted.

(Mat 27:16) At that time they had in custody a notorious prisoner named Jesus¹⁹ Barabbas.

(Mat 27:17) So after they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus²⁰ Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Christ?"²¹

(Mat 27:18) (For he knew that they had handed him over because of envy.)²²

(Mat 27:19) As²³ he was sitting on the judgment seat,²⁴ his wife sent a message²⁵ to him:²⁶ "Have nothing to do with that innocent man;²⁷ I have suffered greatly as a result of a dream²⁸ about him today."

(Mat 27:20) But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed.

(Mat 27:21) The²⁹ governor asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas!"

(Mat 27:22) Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?"³⁰ They all said, "Crucify him!"³¹

(Mat 27:23) He asked, "Why? What wrong has he done?" But they shouted more insistently, "Crucify him!"

(Mat 27:24) ***Jesus is Condemned and Mocked***

When³² Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but that instead a riot was starting, he took some water, washed his hands before the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. You take care of it yourselves!"³³

(Mat 27:25) In³⁴ reply all the people said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

(Mat 27:26) Then he released Barabbas for them. But after he had Jesus flogged,³⁵ he handed him over³⁶ to be crucified.³⁷

(Mat 27:27) Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's residence³⁸ and gathered the whole cohort³⁹ around him.

(Mat 27:28) They⁴⁰ stripped him and put a scarlet robe⁴¹ around him,

(Mat 27:29) and after braiding⁴² a crown of thorns,⁴³ they put it on his head. They⁴⁴ put a staff⁴⁵ in his right hand, and kneeling down before him, they mocked him:⁴⁶ "Hail, king of the Jews!"⁴⁷

(Mat 27:30) They⁴⁸ spat on him and took the staff⁴⁹ and struck him repeatedly⁵⁰ on the head.

(Mat 27:31) When⁵¹ they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then⁵² they led him away to crucify him.

(Mat 27:32) ***The Crucifixion***

As⁵³ they were going out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, whom they forced⁵⁴ to carry his cross.⁵⁵

(Mat 27:33) They⁵⁶ came to a place called Golgotha⁵⁷ (which means "Place of the Skull")⁵⁸

(Mat 27:34) and offered Jesus⁵⁹ wine mixed with gall to drink.⁶⁰ But after tasting it, he would not drink it.

(Mat 27:35) When⁶¹ they had crucified⁶² him, *they divided his clothes by throwing dice.*⁶³

(Mat 27:36) Then they sat down and kept guard over him there.

(Mat 27:37) Above⁶⁴ his head they put the charge against him,⁶⁵ which read:⁶⁶ "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."

(Mat 27:38) Then two outlaws were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

(Mat 27:39) Those⁶⁷ who passed by defamed him, shaking their heads

(Mat 27:40) and saying, "You who can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself!⁶⁸ If you are God's Son, come down⁶⁹ from the cross!"

(Mat 27:41) In⁷⁰ the same way even the chief priests — together with the experts in the law⁷¹ and elders⁷² — were mocking him:⁷³

(Mat 27:42) "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the king of Israel! If he comes down⁷⁴ now from the cross, we will believe in him!

(Mat 27:43) *He trusts in God — let God, if he wants to, deliver him now* ⁷⁵ because he said, 'I am God's Son'!"

(Mat 27:44) The⁷⁶ robbers who were crucified with him also spoke abusively to him.⁷⁷

(Mat 27:45) ***Jesus' Death***

Now from noon until three,⁷⁸ darkness came over all the land.⁷⁹

(Mat 27:46) At⁸⁰ about three o'clock Jesus shouted with a loud voice,⁸¹ " ***Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*** " that is, " ***My***

**God, my God,
why have you forsaken me ?"**⁸²

(Mat 27:47) When⁸³ some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah."

(Mat 27:48) Immediately⁸⁴ one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine,⁸⁵ put it on a stick,⁸⁶ and gave it to him to drink.

(Mat 27:49) But the rest said, "Leave him alone! Let's see if Elijah will come to save him."⁸⁷

(Mat 27:50) Then Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up his spirit.

(Mat 27:51) Just then⁸⁸ the temple curtain⁸⁹ was torn in two, from top to bottom. The⁹⁰ earth shook and the rocks were split apart.

(Mat 27:52) And tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had died⁹¹ were raised.

(Mat 27:53) (They⁹² came out of the tombs after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.) (Mat 27:54) Now when the centurion⁹³ and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were extremely terrified and said, "Truly this one was God's Son!"

(Mat 27:55) Many⁹⁴ women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and given him support⁹⁵ were also there, watching from a distance.

(Mat 27:56) Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

(Mat 27:57) ***Jesus' Burial***

Now⁹⁶ when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus.⁹⁷

(Mat 27:58) He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.⁹⁸ Then Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

(Mat 27:59) Joseph⁹⁹ took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,¹⁰⁰

(Mat 27:60) and placed it¹⁰¹ in his own new tomb that he had cut in the rock.¹⁰² Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance¹⁰³ of the tomb and went away.

(Mat 27:61) (Now Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, opposite the tomb.) (Mat 27:62) ***The Guard at the Tomb***

The¹⁰⁴ next day (which is after the day of preparation) the chief priests and the Pharisees¹⁰⁵ assembled before Pilate (Mat 27:63) and said, "Sir, we remember that while that deceiver was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise again.'

(Mat 27:64) So give orders to secure the tomb until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come and steal his body¹⁰⁶ and say to the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

(Mat 27:65) Pilate said to them, "Take¹⁰⁷ a guard of soldiers. Go and make it as secure as you can."

(Mat 27:66) So¹⁰⁸ they went with the soldiers¹⁰⁹ of the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

(Mat 28:1) ***The Resurrection***

Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

(Guzik)

Mat 28:1-20

MATTHEW 28 - A RISEN LORD JESUS AND HIS COMMISSION

A. The risen Jesus.

1. (Mat_28:1-8) Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany find an empty tomb.

Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you. So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

a. **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb:** They did not expect to find what they did; they came to finish the preparation of Jesus' body, which was cut short by the Sabbath (Luk_24:1-3).

b. **An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it:** When the women came to the tomb, they saw the stone rolled away and an angel sitting on the stone. The door to the tomb was wide open.

c. **He is not here:** These are some of the most beautiful - and important - words ever spoken by an angel to men. One may look all over Jerusalem and see countless thousands of tombs, but one will never find the tomb of Jesus - because **He is not here!**

i. In Israel, we saw many graves and tombs - there is an ocean of tombs on the Mount of Olives, and vast sea of graves outside the eastern wall of the temple mount. You can see the tomb of Rebekka, the tomb of David, the tomb of

Absalom - but you won't find the tomb of Jesus anywhere.
He is not here!

d. **Come, see the place where the Lord lay:** The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out. Joh_20:19 tells us that Jesus, in His resurrection body, could pass through material barriers. It was rolled away so that others could see in and be persuaded that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

i. The *fact* of the resurrection is clear enough. We must also grapple with the *meaning* of the resurrection. Simply, Jesus' resurrection proved that His death was an actual propitiation for sin and that the Father had accepted it as such. The cross was the payment, the resurrection the receipt, proving that the payment was fully accepted.

e. **Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead:** The angel commanded them to be the first messengers of the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Since these women were the some of the few people courageous enough to publicly identify themselves with Jesus, it was an appropriate honor.

2. (Mat_28:9-10) Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany meet a risen Jesus.

And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

a. **As they went to tell His disciples:** The women met Jesus as they obeyed the command to tell the news of the resurrection.

b. **Jesus met them, saying "Rejoice!"** What else could Jesus say to these women? What else could they do other than **rejoice**?

c. **So they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him:** When the women met Jesus, they were compelled to worship Him. An hour before, they thought

everything was lost because they thought Jesus was dead. Now they know everything is gained because Jesus is alive.

i. And not only alive, but *resurrected*. Before the resurrection of Jesus, there are several instances in the Bible of dead people brought back to life. But those were corpses resuscitated back to life, and they would die again. Jesus was *resurrected*, raised again to a new order of life. He would never die again, and His resurrection body was not the same as His previous body

ii. Notably, Jesus *received the worship* of these ladies. If Jesus were not God, it would have been terribly sinful for Him to receive this worship. But being God, it was good and appropriate for Him to receive it.

4. (Mat_28:11-15) The cover-up of the resurrection begins with the bribery of the guards.

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.’ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

a. **Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept”** : This cover-up attempt shows the depravity of the priests. They knew the truth of the resurrection, yet they rejected that truth.

b. **While we slept**: The cover-up also shows their foolishness. If the guards were asleep, how would they know that it was **His disciples** that stole the body of Jesus?

c. **This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day**: Through the years, there have been many objections suggested to the resurrection of Jesus. Some say He didn’t die at all, but just “swooned” on the cross and

revived in the tomb. Others say He really died, but His body was stolen. Still others suggest He really died, but His desperate followers hallucinated His resurrection. A plain, simple understanding of these evidences of the resurrection of Jesus destroys all of these theories, and shows they take far more faith to believe than the Biblical account.

i. "I suppose, brethren, that we may have persons arise, who will doubt whether there was ever such a man as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte; and when they do, - when all reliable history is flung to the winds, - then, but not till then, may they begin to question whether Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for this historical fact is attested by more witnesses than almost any other fact that stands on record in history, whether sacred or profane."

(Spurgeon)

ii. We sometimes sing: "You ask me how I know He lives; He lives, He lives inside my heart."

But that is not the best way to prove Jesus lives. He lives because the historical evidence *demand*s we believe in the resurrection of Jesus. If we can believe *anything* in history, we can believe the reliable, confirmed testimony of these eyewitnesses. Jesus rose from the dead.

B. The great commission.

1. (Mat_28:16-17) The disciples meet Jesus at Galilee.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

a. **To the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them:** Just as the women who met the resurrected Jesus, the disciples met the risen Jesus as they did what He told them to do.

b. **When they saw Him, they worshipped Him:** This was not their first meeting with the risen Jesus; but it was an important one. At this meeting, they received their apostolic commission.

c. **They worshipped Him:** The natural reaction to encountering the risen Jesus is worship, even if some do doubt.

2. (Mat_28:18-20) Jesus instructs His disciples regarding their duty after His departure.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

a. **All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth:** This commission is given in light of the authority of Jesus. This indicates that this is an authoritative command, not a suggestion. It is the same idea as if an officer reminded a private of his rank before he gave the order.

b. **Go therefore:** Because Jesus has this authority, we are **therefore** commanded to **go**. It is His authority that sends us, His authority that guides us, and His authority that empowers us.

c. **Make disciples of all the nations:** The command is to **make disciples**, not merely converts or supporters of a cause. The idea behind the word **disciple** is of a scholar, a learner, or a student.

i. The kind of commitment expected from a disciple is expressed in the command to baptize.

A person is totally immersed in water, and *total* commitment is the goal for a disciple.

d. **Of all the nations:** In His previous ministry, Jesus deliberately restricted His work to the Jewish people (Mat_15:24) and previously sent His disciples with the same restriction (Mat_10:6). Only on rare exceptions did Jesus minister among the Gentiles (Mat_15:21-28). Now all of that is in the past, and the disciples are commissioned to take

the gospel to **all the nations**. There is no place on earth where the gospel of Jesus should not be preached, and where disciples should not be made.

e. **Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**: Disciples are made through **teaching**. This **teaching** is not with words only, but with the power of the always-present Jesus. He will be present with His people until the job of making disciples is done - until the **end of the age**.

i. The content of the teaching must be **all things that I have commanded you**. The followers of Jesus are responsible to present the whole counsel of God to those who made disciples.

f. **Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age**: Jesus sent His disciples with a mission to fulfill, but He did not send them alone. The promise of His constant presence was more than enough to strengthen and guide the disciples as they obeyed Jesus in making **disciples of all the nations**.

i. His presence means *privilege*, because we work with a Great King. Paul understood this principle well in 1Co_3:9, where he wrote: *For we are God's fellow workers*. Since Jesus promised "**I am with you always**," then we work together with Him in all our service. We certainly work *for* Jesus, but more than that we work *with* Jesus.

ii. His presence means *protection*, because we are never out of His sight or supervision.

iii. His presence means *power*, because as we fulfill this great command, we work in His name.

iv. His presence means *peace*, because it always reminds us that the church belongs to Jesus.

It is His church, and His work. How then can we worry?

(Mat 28:2) Suddenly there was a severe earthquake, for an angel of the Lord¹ descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it.

(Mat 28:3) His² appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

(Mat 28:4) The³ guards were shaken and became like dead men because they were so afraid of him.

(Mat 28:5) But the angel said⁴ to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know⁵ that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.⁶

(Mat 28:6) He is not here, for he has been raised,⁷ just as he said. Come and see the place where he⁸ was lying.

(Mat 28:7) Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead. He⁹ is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.' Listen, I have told you!"

(Mat 28:8) So¹⁰ they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

(Mat 28:9) But¹¹ Jesus met them, saying, "Greetings!" They¹² came to him, held on to his feet and worshiped him.

(Mat 28:10) Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there."

(Mat 28:11) ***The Guards' Report***

While¹³ they were going, some¹⁴ of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened.

(Mat 28:12) After¹⁵ they had assembled with the elders and formed a plan, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, (Mat 28:13) telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came at night and stole his body¹⁶ while we were asleep.'

(Mat 28:14) If¹⁷ this matter is heard before the governor,¹⁸ we will satisfy him¹⁹ and keep you out of trouble."²⁰

(Mat 28:15) So they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story is told among the Jews to this day.²¹

(Mat 28:16) ***The Great Commission***

So²² the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain Jesus had designated.

(Mat 28:17) When²³ they saw him, they worshiped him,²⁴ but some doubted.²⁵

(Mat 28:18) Then Jesus came up and said to them,²⁶ "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

(Mat 28:19) Therefore go²⁷ and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁸

(Mat 28:20) teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember,²⁹ I am with you³⁰ always, to the end of the age."³¹